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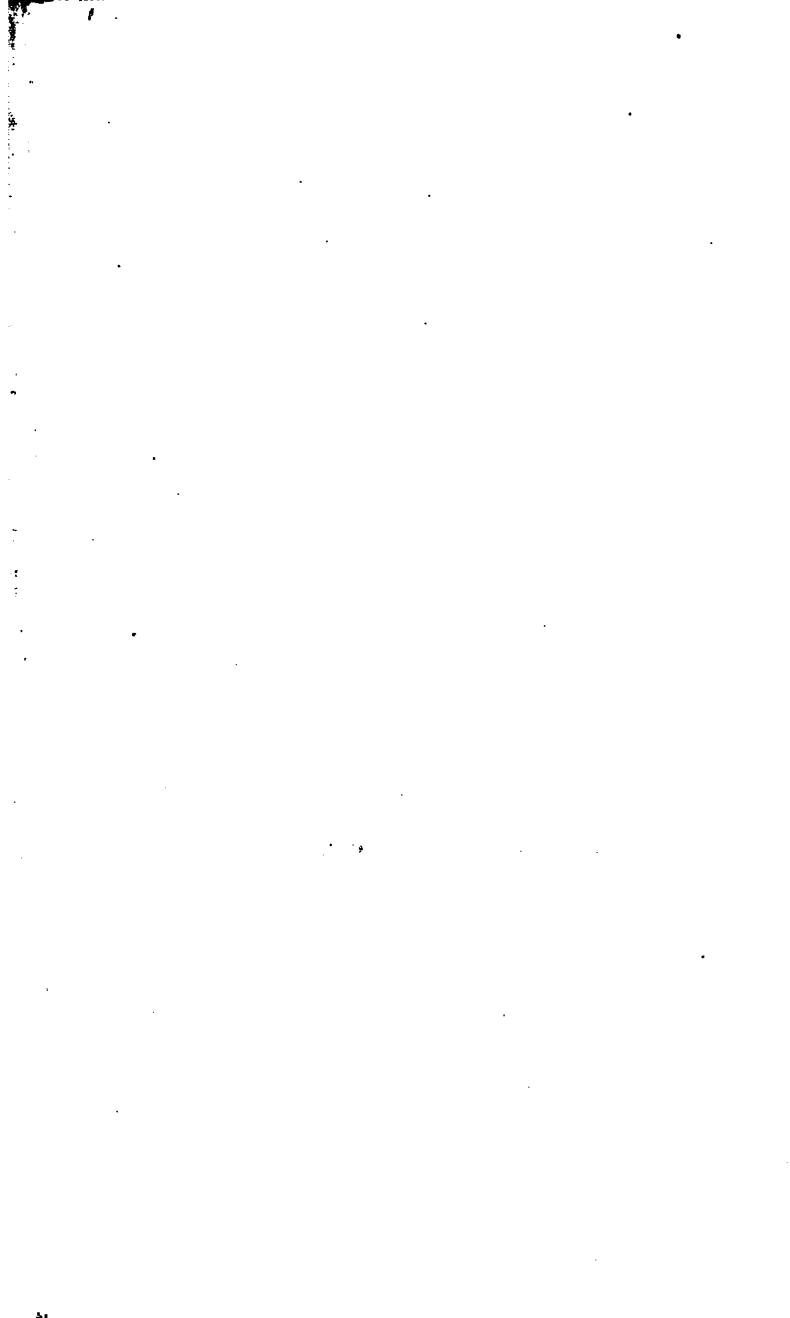


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THE LIFE

S. M. A. F. I. L. I. T. I. O. N.

OF THE

REV. J. M. A. F. I. L. I. T. I. O. N.

OF THE

PROF. J. M. A. F. I. L. I. T. I. O. N.

BY J. M. A. F. I. L. I. T. I. O. N.

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THE LIFE
OF
MRS. MARY FLETCHER,
CONSORT AND RELICT

OF THE
REV. JOHN FLETCHER,
VICAR OF MADELEY, SALOP.

COMPILED FROM HER JOURNAL AND OTHER AUTHENTIC
DOCUMENTS.

BY HENRY MOORE.

The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned,—1 Tim. i, 5.

By faith,—choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,—Heb. xi, 25.

These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,—Rev. xiv, 4

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PREFACE.

A SHORT time after I was appointed to the Birmingham district, the papers of the late Mrs. Fletcher were put into my hands. I was informed at the same time, that the venerable person whose life was recorded in them had mentioned me as one that she wished should prepare and publish her papers; and that an application to that effect would have been made to me before that time, but that the distance of my former appointment had prevented it, Mrs. Fletcher having laid an injunction on her friend, to whom, by will, she had committed them, not to give them absolutely into the hands of any person whatsoever.

I examined those papers with no common interest. They gave an account not only of the writer's own life, but involved, in some respects, that of her admirable husband. I was certain that those records were desired, and would be received, by the most pious in these kingdoms; not as a common religious biography, but as the record of an uncommon work of God; and that they would not be expected to fall short of any account which has come forth in that great revival of scriptural Christianity in our day, concerning which we have so often been constrained to say, *What hath God wrought?*

I have often wished to see such a display of that work as would show its genuine nature and fruits, free from the colouring of those writers who were not directly concerned in it; or of those who might be so anxious about its public reputation as to forget that the *circumcision of the heart* is justified only by those *children of the light and of the day* who prove its power, and cry, *Abba, Father, by the Spirit of adoption; and whose praise is not of men, but of God.* It is much to be desired also to see such an account made living and powerful by being personified;—to see an individual thus *walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.*

A general history of this work, including all the important circumstances, has been already published, especially in the journals of the Rev. Mr. John Welsey, the father of Methodism, so called. In these we see, as in the Gospel, *the grain of mustard seed increasing and becoming a great tree*, to the astonishment of those who witnessed its small beginning,—who “saw the cloud arise little as a human hand.” The display given us in that account, is distinguished by the same simplicity, purity, and classical beauty, which are observable in all the writings of that eminent instrument of God. This large survey is highly satisfactory; but the aid of living testimony is necessary to bring it home to the hearts of those whose inquiry is, *What shall I do to be saved? How shall I walk with God?*

Religion is nothing less than the life of God in the soul of man. It is the offspring of God through faith, and is not, and cannot be attached to Churches or religious communities, though they are so highly necessary to its propagation and increase. It never was so attached; though while the covenant of God was established with the nation of the Jews, it had that appearance. But even then, *all were not Israel who were of Israel. The children of the promise, and not the children of the flesh, were counted for the seed.* The Gospel, however, to the stumbling of the greatest part of that people, put an end to that appearance. The national covenant answered the design of Him who gave it. It foretold, typified, and prepared the way of *the only begotten Son of God.* But who could abide the day of his coming? Who could stand when he appeared? It is true he was meek and lowly in heart, and his very word and action, toward even the greatest transgressors, demonstrated that *he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.* But he exposed and resisted all those who walked in the *deceivableness of unrighteousness*, and who boasted, like their fathers, saying, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are we!* He looked for personal religion; and all who attached it to names, ordinances, or communities, he answered with, *Ye worship ye know not what.* He enforced *poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, mercifulness, and purity of heart*; showing thus

the beginning and progress of religion, as given to *guilty, sinful, helpless creatures, in whom dwells no good thing*; and who are thus to be made *rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven*: and who thus alone can be made *new creatures, and meet for the inheritance among the saints in light*; whose robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

These pure and high principles of holy writ, so agreeable to the exalted character of Jehovah, and to the fallen and wretched condition of man, were sought out and adopted by the band of brothers in the university of Oxford, nearly ninety years ago. One great truth involved the whole as necessary to salvation,—*Without holiness no man shall see the Lord*. They immediately followed after this, making every sacrifice, and ordering their whole life that they might attain it. Some time after, the Lord showed them that *his way* of conferring holiness was *by faith*; and that he *justifies men, as being ungodly, through the redemption that is in Jesus*, before he sanctifies them. They now knew the whole truth, and the Lord thrust them forth from their beloved retirement, to raise a holy people. This was the one design of these chosen instruments, and every thing short of it they counted, to use the language of St. Paul, *wood, hay, or stubble*.

But did they *spend their strength for naught*? Were they disappointed of their hope? Were not a holy people raised up? Let the Life of Mrs. Fletcher speak. Let the pious reader say, if she be not introduced, in these memoirs, among the excellent of the earth;—all of whom with one voice would testify,

“Blind we were, but now we see;
Deaf, we hearken, Lord! to thee;
Dumb, for thee our tongues employ,
Lame, and lo! we leap for joy.”

“Some who have separated from other communities,” says Mr. Wesley, “laid the foundation of that work in judging and condemning others: we, on the contrary, in judging and condemning ourselves.”

I cannot therefore but greatly rejoice that these memoirs are given to the public, and especially to that community of which the writer was so long a highly honoured

and useful member. I cannot but think they will be a great blessing to the people of God of every denomination; and especially to all who desire to *walk even as Christ also walked*, and who are conscious of an evil nature, opposing *that will of God which is their sanctification*. In this point of view especially these memoirs will be considered, I think, as very precious to all who *fight this good fight of faith*. The reader will find in them no paint; nothing to set the writer off; no extravagance; but plain life, raised and sanctified by constant attention to the duties and sacrifices of the Gospel; and issuing in a constant pleading of the *great and precious promises*, by which we are made partakers of the Divine nature: with unremitting efforts to walk by that rule, *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God*.

Luther observed that there never was a work of God in the earth that lasted longer, in any community, than the common life of man; that is, upon an average, about thirty years. Generally about that period the *vineyard which the Lord planted with his own right hand has been let out to husbandmen*, who, yielding to their natural propensities, and accommodating the work of the Lord to *the course of this world*, have not been careful to *render to him* the required fruit. Hence the visible state of decay, or of death, in those communities which once manifested the Divine hand of him who formed them. But this work has lasted nearly thrice that time! There are none alive who witnessed its beginning, and but very few who knew its early days. If any such meet with this work, they will call to mind the very glorious time when it was altogether the work of God; when it was unsupported by any worldly power or wisdom, and had all that is *earthly, sensual, and devilish*, combined against it. They will see also a consistency in the design, and in the mode of execution, which is truly edifying, and *not of this world*. The instruments employed in this work, and especially that *one* so eminently called thereto, were not careful for such prosperity as worldly men desire. They knew, like their blessed Master, that *all whom their Father gave them would come unto them*, and they did not desire to bring the world into his fold. The world is called, and redeemed; but to add to the family of God all who obeyed that call,

was their only ambition, and the object of their incessant labours.

The great superintendent of this work, under God, looked not for what the world calls great talents in his helpers. In this respect also he gladly used *those whom the Father gave him*; who were witnesses of the truths which they were called to teach: men who *knew God* (in the only way in which he can be truly and powerfully known) *as being merciful to their unrighteousness, and remembering their sins no more*. He was careful also to see that the true fruit accompanied their ministry, *the justification of the ungodly, and the sanctification of the unholy*. He used to say, "The best physician is not he who writes the best recipes, but he who makes the most cures." When men of learning united with him in this Divine work, he greatly rejoiced, and gladly received them. The late Mr. Fletcher was an eminent instance of that kind. His learning was deep, extensive, clear, and various; but, like his venerable friend, whom he always called father, he counted even all these estimable advantages *as dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord*. So abased was this great man in his own eyes, and so entirely did he take the Divine mould of the Gospel, that there was not one of those helpers in the work whom he did not rejoice to call his brother in Christ, and whom he did not *in honour prefer to himself*, even in his own parish.

The private members also were men and women of God; and among these Miss Bosanquet always held, in general estimation, the chief place. Her superiority in natural and providential gifts,—her well known entire devotedness,—her constancy and perseverance in the Divine life,—her doing and suffering the whole will of her Master, all fitted her, as by a general consent, to be the consort of that great man, *whose praise is in all the Churches*; whose admirable writings will live while piety and learning are honoured in the earth; and which have forced even those who did not know his piety, or affected to lament that such talents should be so connected, to acknowledge his great superiority.

That the highest principles of the Christian religion should be brought into common life, is the greatest dis-

play of the power of Divine truth that is possible, and the most glorious victory over the world. It is thus that *righteousness shall cover the earth*, and bring glory to Him that sitteth upon the throne. How poor, how questionable, are all the refinements of the closet, the study, or the cloister, when compared with the *love of God and our neighbour*, brought into act, and exhibited on right principles, amid the common concerns and labours of life, and attended with its usual trials, afflictions, and mortifications! To persevere thus is indeed the perseverance of the saints, and realizes that old saying, too often quoted by pride and apathy: "It is a sight worthy of God, when he looks down from heaven, to see a virtuous mind unswervingly struggle with adversity." Such a sight, I trust, the pious reader will behold in the life of Mrs. Fletcher. Her one support in all her trials was, in substance, that of Job: *He knoweth the way that I take, and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*

What indeed can be so interesting to a mind well informed and disposed, as to behold the daily walk of one, who, from a very early age, had devoted her whole life to God? Not living in seclusion, but walking in what Jeremiah calls the *highway, the way of holiness, in which the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err?* To see our Lord's sermon on the mount brought into daily and hourly practice, according to the evident design of its Divine Author? To see *the house thus built upon the rock, the truth and love of God*; and then to behold *the rains descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon it!* Surely they who contemplate the scene, and behold its stability, will exultingly exclaim: *It falls not; for it is founded upon a rock!*

That such a person should be judged by men in the flesh, while living to God in the spirit, will not be surprising to any who learn what religion is, by the word and Spirit of God, and who know the real character of man. Mrs. Fletcher was thus judged. The common imputations she outlived, or lived down. One perhaps may remain. It may still perhaps be said, she was an enthusiast. To many who use this word no answer need be returned. Any thing above the dead form of godliness is with them enthusiasm. *A love to Him who first loved*

us, and who gave himself for us, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, which would at all equal in its attachment the love that is of earth and sense, is with them all madness, folly, or hypocrisy; wisdom is justified only by her children.

But more sober minds may object that she too much minded impressions, dreams, and those inward feelings which religious persons are supposed to be particularly exposed to. That such things should be condemned, *toto genere*, is hardly consistent with any true religion, seeing the oracles of God so frequently mention them; and not as attached to the prophetic or ministerial character, but as given to those who walk with God in the humblest path of life. The wisest and best of men have not only spoken of such things with respect, but have made them a part of the religion which they have held forth to ages and generations, to communities and kingdoms. Concerning religious feelings and impressions, the liturgy of the Church of England, and her established institutes, bear the fullest and most honourable testimony; setting the highest value on that mode of Divine teaching, and of bestowing encouragement and consolation. We know the worship of our Church is so constituted, as, if possible, to impress the whole nation; but there are parts of it that can only be considered as describing and edifying *the children of God*. How striking are those passages in the communion service, where those who spiritually *eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood*, are said, agreeably to the Holy Scriptures, to *dwell in Christ, and Christ in them*; to be *one with Christ, and Christ with them*! And in the seventeenth article, where there is the strongest description of those adopted children of God (so strong indeed in some of the terms, that not a few have mistaken this Scriptural account of them as descriptive of Mr. Calvin's system) *who, by the counsel of God, are delivered from the curse and damnation due to sin, and brought through Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour*. "Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be

made like unto the image of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity." And "as this godly consideration of their election in Christ is *full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort,—to such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things; so it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation, and fervently kindle their love to God.*"

Now with all this life, union, and holy fellowship, are there no corresponding feelings and enjoyments? No *tasting the powers of the world to come*? No lively impressions of *their heavenly inheritance*? No consciousness of *his love to them, or their love to him, in whom they dwell*? No *peace or joy in believing*? If this were indeed so, then I am afraid, the life, the union, of which those feelings and impressions have been considered as the gracious marks, have no real existence; and the system which boasts of a peace of which the possessor has no consciousness, a joy which raiseth not "the mind to high and heavenly things," and a hope which is not full of immortality, may triumphantly take its place in the *congregation of the dead*!

But it will be asked, Did she not lay an undue stress upon these things? I believe not. I have not perceived it. On the contrary, I have seen, even when she believed herself led by the Spirit of God to do that good which was the settled purpose of her whole life, she manifested the greatest care to walk according to St. John's direction, *Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits whether they be of God.* In obedience to this, she considered and pondered all her ways, and brought every purpose and act to the only sure touchstone, the unerring *word of God.* The same charge was often brought against Mr. Wesley, and for precisely the same reasons. Answering the most respectable of those who thus *laid to his charge things that he knew not*, viz., Dr. Gibson, the venerable bishop of London, he replies, "In the whole compass of language, there is not a proposition which belongs less to me than this. I have declared again and

again, that I make *the word of God the rule of all my actions*; and that I no more follow any *secret impulse* instead thereof, than I follow Mohammed or Confucius."

Let Mrs. Fletcher be *weighed in this balance*, and I believe *she will not be found wanting*. She, like Mr. Wesley, and her excellent husband, *served God in newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*. Hence *her life was hid with Christ in God*, and she had impressions, and consolations, which are the fruits and evidences of that life. But she well knew that *the Spirit of truth* never contradicts, never is inconsistent with himself. His written oracles, and his lively, and life-giving teaching, agree together. She humbly and earnestly attended to that direction, *To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*. A writer of the present day has strangely said that he knew of no witness, no influence, no teaching, but the *written word of God*. Perhaps he does not know any other. But there are many who walk with God who do. But if that writer only means that he knows, or acknowledges, no witness, no influence, no teaching, that is *contrary* to that holy word, or that is inconsistent with its one design, *to save us from all sin into all holiness*, every true Christian will applaud the sentiment. Mrs. Fletcher was watchful in this respect, being aware of the danger. Hence, though she might err, she never deviated from the path. She might mistake; but she was always preserved from any departure from her God.

The pious reader will be glad to be assured that the whole of these memoirs are from Mrs. Fletcher's pen. In compiling her Life, I have left out much valuable matter, which was either contained, in substance, in other parts of these memoirs, or was not of sufficient interest to appear in the publication. I have also compressed what I thought was redundant, that the work might not be needlessly swelled. I have also thought it right to press her sentences into more conciseness. She wrote in the fulness of her heart, and with admirable sense; but her style was rather too copious, and sometimes too diffuse, for narrative or history. But I have taken care, at the same time, to give the admirable issues of her

enlightened mind, with all the force and simplicity with which she recorded them.

Those who have read the lives of those truly pious women, Madame Guion, Chantel, Bourignon, and others of the same class, which so abundantly prove that even the cloud of Romish superstition does not preclude the rays of *the Sun of righteousness*, and that involuntary ignorance God still winketh at, will be glad to see a life, in the Protestant Church, superior to any of them. Especially they will see that all in her may be safely imitated, being all according to *the faith once delivered to the saints*. They will see, also, not the fair picture only, but how it came to bear the stamp Divine. They may trace its progress, and be encouraged to believe that the Lord, who is ever the same, will thus *work in them to will and to do*, notwithstanding opposing corruptions; and they will thus be encouraged to give themselves up to that *grace of God which teaches us to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

H. MOORE.

Birmingham, April 14, 1817.

THE
LIFE OF MRS. FLETCHER.

PART THE FIRST.

HER EARLY LIFE AND CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

I was born September the first, O. S., 1739, at Laytonstone, in Essex. From my earliest years I can remember the Spirit of God striving with me, and offering me salvation; but I slighted these most gracious calls, and many times resisted the most tender invitations. One day, from a little circumstance which occurred when I was about four years old, I received such a conviction that God heareth prayer, that it often administered much comfort to me in seasons of trial and danger. Of this I had the greater need, being by nature fearful even to a degree of folly. How much this effeminacy of disposition has cost me, in my Christian warfare, and what sufferings, as well as spiritual loss, I have sustained from it, is known only to my heavenly Father.

When I was five years old, I began to have much concern about my eternal welfare, and frequently inquired of those about me, whether such and such things were sins. On Sabbath evenings, my dear father used to instruct us in the Church catechism. At those seasons I can remember asking many questions. I wished to know whether any ever did *love God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves*; and whether it was really the command of God that we should do so: also if the Bible really meant all it said? It seemed to me that if it did, I was wrong, and all about me in danger; for there appeared to be a great difference between the description of a Christian given in the word of God, and those who walk under that name.

As I was a backward child, and of weaker understanding than the others, I was not well read in the Scriptures at that very early age; but sentences out of the word of

God frequently occurred to my mind, and made a deep impression ; such as, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.* I would answer, But I do not love God at all ; I do not know how to love him ; and with respect to loving my neighbour thus, I am sure I do not ; for though my sister is dearer to me than any body else, I do not love her as well as myself. Again, that word struck me much ; St. Paul says, *I have fought the good fight ;* and when I was baptized, the minister said I was to be “ Christ’s faithful soldier and servant, and fight manfully under his banner.” This amazed me greatly. I thought, I am sure I do not fight, neither do I know what to fight against. But, above all, that sentence would follow me, *Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it ;* and, *If ye are not of the world, the world will hate you.* I did not feel it a narrow way, neither did the world hate me ; therefore I questioned often whether I was not quite out of the way, yet it was not with any terror : I believed if the Lord saw that I was wrong, he would make me right, and sometimes I prayed for it. At other times I was very careless ; yet these reflections still dwelt on my mind, and often perplexed me. I frequently asked questions about these subjects, but they were often very lightly treated. Those parts of Scripture were represented as very liable to be mistaken, and that they did not require obedience in all the strictness which I seemed to suppose. This well agreed with my carnal mind, and I thus soon quenched those tender convictions : so easy is it to drown the soft voice of the Spirit by carnal reasonings.

I now drew the following reflections : If the Bible does not mean all it seems to speak, with regard to the commands of God, certainly the same allowance may be made for its threatenings ; so that I began to believe there was no hell at all, or at least not half so terrible as I had been taught to think. This thought raised in me a dislike to the word of God, and great coldness and carelessness throughout all my conduct. But my adorable Lord did not give me up to the hardness of my heart, but still followed me with his drawings. Often I thought, perhaps the Bible does mean what it says, and then I am not a Christian ; and greatly did I wish to know what was the truth. My sister, who was nearly five years older than I,

was also under a concern for her soul : she wished to know and do the will of God.

About this time there came a servant maid to live with my father, who had heard of, and felt some little of the power of inward religion. It was among the people called Methodists she had received her instructions. Seeing the uneasiness my sister was under, she took some opportunities of conversing with her. I was at this season with my grandmother. On my return home, my sister repeated the substance of these conversations to me. I well remember the very spot we stood on, and the words she spake, which, though we were but a few minutes together, sunk so deeply into my heart, that they were never afterward erased. My reflections were suited to a child not seven years old. I thought if I became a Methodist, I should be sure of salvation ; and determined, if ever I could get to that people, whatever it cost I would be one of them. But after a few conversations, and hearing my sister read some little books which this servant had given to her, I found out it was not the being joined to any people that would save me, but I must be converted, and have faith in Christ ; that I was to be saved by believing ; and that believing would make me holy, and give me a power to love and serve God.

The servant had now left our family, and we continued like blind persons groping our way in the dark ; yet, though we had so far discerned the truth as to express it in the above manner, I could not comprehend it. My heart rose against the idea of being saved by a faith which I could not understand. One day, looking over the pictures in the Book of Martyrs, I thought it would be easier to burn than believe ; and heartily did I wish that the Papists would come and burn me, and then I thought I should be quite safe. Yet these troubled thoughts were mixed with a degree of hope. I thought, God does love me, I believe, after all ; and, perhaps, he will show me what it is to believe and be converted.

When I was between seven and eight years old, musing one day on that thought, What can it be to know my sins forgiven, and to have faith in Jesus ? I felt my heart rise against God, for having appointed a way of salvation so hard to be understood ; and with anguish of soul I said,

if it were to die a martyr, I could do it ; or to give away all I have ; or when grown up to become a servant, that would be easy ; but I shall never know how to believe. In that moment these words were applied with mighty power to my soul,—

“ Who on Jesus relies, without money or price,
The pearl of forgiveness and holiness buys.”

They were accompanied with a light and power I had never known before ; and with joy I cried out, I do, I do rely on Jesus ; yes, I do rely on Jesus, and God counts me righteous for what he hath done and suffered, and hath forgiven all my sins ! I was surprised that I could not find out this before. I had thought every thing easier than to believe ; but now I thought the way of believing more easy than any other. A ray of light into the Gospel plan shone upon my soul, and I began to adore the wonders of redeeming love. But, alas ! it was but as the drops before a shower ; in a few days I lost the power in a great measure,* though not the light of this blessing. I can remember many promises, after this, being at times brought to my mind. Something also of a confidence in the Lord Jesus I ever retained ; and when fears would spring up concerning the day of judgment, I used to comfort myself with this thought,—Jesus is to be the judge, and I cannot be afraid of Jesus. But I had not yet learned that lesson,—

“ Man for the simple life Divine
What will it cost to break ?
Ere pleasure soft, and wily pride,
No more within him speak ?”

Some time after I had thus by faith “tasted of the powers of the world to come,” I fell into an uncommon lowness and weakness of nerves, which was accompanied with grievous temptations. I was oppressed beyond measure with the fear of sin, and accused in almost every thing I said or did, so that I was altogether a heap of inconsistency. This was followed by temptations unspeakably afflicting. It was continually suggested to my mind, I had blasphemed against the Holy Ghost. The consequent effect of these temptations on my temper, drew on

* She was not favoured at this time with Christian fellowship. She had none to help her in the way of faith.—Ed.

me many grievous burdens, and exposed me to so much anger and reproach from my parents, as made me weary of life. It appeared to them that I was obstinate and disobedient; and my flesh has seemed ready to move on my bones, when I have heard my dear mother say, "That girl is the most perverse creature that ever lived; I cannot think what is come to her;" and my heart used to sink like a stone, for I knew not what to do, and the grief of my mind quite destroyed my health. My grandfather and grandmother, who were to me the tenderest of parents, seeing me in such a poor way as to my body, (though they knew not the cause,) desired to have me with them. I grew something better while I was there; but on my return home, I became as bad as ever.

This heavy season lasted, I think, nine weeks; when one day opening my mind to my sister, (as indeed I had often before attempted to do, but could not explain myself,) she providentially used these words in her answer, "Why, you do not *mean* to blaspheme, do you?" A light immediately struck into my mind; I weighed the thought over and over, and could truly say, Lord, thou knowest I do not mean to blaspheme. I then recollected that I had heard something about temptation, and often wondered what it was. I thought, it may be, Satan whispers this into my mind, like what we read about Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress, going through the valley of the shadow of death. I then determined never to regard it more, but always answer with these words, I do not *mean* to blaspheme, I will acknowledge Christ for ever; and in a few days I was perfectly delivered. I am the more full on this head, because it has been a warning to me ever since, not to be too severe in passing a judgment on the actions of children, whose reflections are far deeper, and their feelings much keener, than we are apt to imagine.

I was now, I believe, about ten years old, and can recollect many comfortable moments in reading the word of God. The promises in Isaiah were, in a particular manner, applied to my soul, and I hardly ever opened the Bible but there was something for me; till one day I heard a person make this remark, that many people took promises to themselves which did not belong to them. Of some, she observed, they belonged to the Church; others to the

Jews ; such and such to the Gentiles, &c. ; and then began to blame the presumption of those who applied them to their own souls ! Such a thought had never entered my heart before. I knew the words were primarily spoken on particular occasions ; but the Lord had led me to believe that his word was written to every soul, so far as they were willing to receive it by faith. But, from the above conversation, I was unhinged.* I knew not what to choose, or what to refuse : so that being cast into reasonings, I lost my love for reading the Scriptures, and sunk into a very cold and lifeless state. When I was twelve years old, we went to Bath for three months. Here I met with many dissipations, and had, I may truly say, no enjoyment of religion ; only when in the midst of the ball room I used to think, if I knew where to find the Methodists, or any who would show me how to please God, I would tear off all my fine things, and run through the fire to them : and sometimes I thought, if ever I am my own mistress, I will spend half the day in working for the poor, and the other half in prayer.

When I was about thirteen, the things of God began to return with more power on my mind. One day my sister, visiting Mrs. Lefevre,† found her truly awakened, and in earnest to save her soul. She told me this news with great delight ; for as our parents had no suspicion of her being a Methodist, we saw the Lord had opened us a door into that Christian liberty we so much longed after. At her house we got opportunities of conversation with religious persons, which a good deal strengthened our hands, though we often said to each other, These Methodists do not quite answer our expectations ; though our time is short with them, they lose much of it before they begin to converse with us about our souls : the apostles would not have done so. But we must not form our judgment by the rich ; let us wait till we get acquainted with some of the poor among them ; perhaps they will be right Methodists, and more like the first Christians.

Sometimes that promise was brought powerfully to my mind, “ Whatsoever ye shall ask, believing, ye shall re-

* Here again she felt the want of Christian fellowship.—Ed.

† Well known in the Methodist connection, by her admirable letters, published many years ago.

ceive :” then, thought I, I may ask all the grace I will ; I may ask power never to offend my God again. Faith sprung up in my soul, and I was much drawn out in prayer for holiness ; till one day speaking of it to a particular person, she raised many objections to the thought of all sin being removed from the heart. I felt it as if cold water were thrown on a newly kindled fire, and the wings of my faith seemed clipped. Fearing lest I was wrong I prayed the Lord to answer for himself by his word. So taking up the Bible, with much prayer I opened it, and immediately cast my eyes on these words, “ Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh ; is any thing too hard for me ?” It came with power ; my heart, as it were, leaped for joy ; and I cried out, Now I will wrestle, and I shall prevail.

Toward the end of the following winter, there was a confirmation at St. Paul’s ; and my father desired I should be confirmed. This was a very rousing ordinance to me : for some time before I had felt how unworthy I was of it ; how unfit thus solemnly to devote myself to God, by renewing that covenant I had so often broken. I read the order of confirmation, with the ministration of baptism, over and over, and besought my God to give me power to keep the charge of the Lord faithfully. For some months after, every time I approached the Lord’s table, I had a very peculiar sense of his presence, and sometimes I felt as if the Lord Jesus did from his own hand give me the sacred emblems of his body and blood.

But the next year my mind again wandered after many things, and though I tasted, now and then, a little of the loving kindness of the Lord, yet in the general I was greatly under the power of my own will. Pride and perverseness got many times the upper hand, and there was nothing in my life or conversation which could adorn the Gospel ; but I did not then see my conduct in that light. While our love is small, our perceptions in spiritual things are very dark. Alas ! I thought I walked as a Christian ; but now that I see so much more of the holiness of God, I also discern more fully the depth of my fall, and am astonished that either God or man bore with me. While the carnal mind retained this power, I do not wonder my dear mother should not love me as the rest of her children ;

for I was not only more dull and indolent in every thing I had to learn, but I gave way to an insolent and disobedient spirit in such a degree toward the whole family, that the recollection has often seemed to draw blood from my heart. How perfectly do I feel these words my own,—

“Sink down, my soul, sink lower still,
Lie level with the dust.”

But the Lord did not forsake me. One night after spending some time in prayer, I cast my eyes on a book Mrs. Lefevre had given me, and read these words :

“I'll look into my Saviour's breast ;
Away, sad doubt and anxious care,
Mercy is all that 's written there.
Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free boundless mercy cries.”

I saw, as it were, the Father of mercy opening his arms to receive me, and on that boundless love I had liberty to cast my whole soul. I was more and more thankful for my union with Mrs. Lefevre, and experienced in her the greatest comfort of my life.

About this season my ever honoured grandfather and grandmother were taken from us. He was one of the excellent of the earth : his life, in many respects, was remarkable and singular. In his last illness he delighted much in these words, “My sheep hear my voice ; I know them, and they follow me,” &c. He was aged seventy-nine, and had lived with my grandmother forty-five years, in a union not usually to be met with. He was a pattern in many respects ; plain in his dress, mortified in his food, and strictly conscientious in all his expenses. When many dishes were on his table, he scarcely ate of any thing but mutton, and that for many years, because he believed it most conducive to his health. His love and charity to the poor were uncommon. He esteemed it a reproach to any man to say he died very rich ; adding, It is too plain a mark he has not made a good use of his income.

One day upon the Exchange, a gentleman who was by him said to another, “Sir John, I give you joy ; they tell me you have completed your hundred thousand pounds.” The other replied, “I hope to double it before I die.” My grandfather, turning short, said, “Then, Sir John, you are

not worthy of it." Once being at the table of a nobleman, he observed the guests drinking to excess, and conversing in a very unchristian manner. At first he tried to turn the conversation; but the torrent being too strong, he rose up, and leaning over the back of his chair, he gave them a solemn reproof, joined to an affectionate warning, and then left the company. I have been with him in his chariot when he has suddenly stopped it to reprove profane swearing on the road.

My grandmother was a woman of an uncommonly sweet temper; and having acquired a good deal of skill in physic, she so helped the poor, that they looked on her as a mother, a nurse, and a counsellor. When my grandfather had been dead three months, she dreamed, one night, he came to her, and standing by the bedside, said she "should come to him shortly, till then his happiness was not so complete as it would be;" and added, "*Study the Scriptures, study the Scriptures, in them ye think ye have eternal life.*" From this time she applied to them daily, in a manner superior to what she had done before; though she had always a high veneration for the word of God. About three weeks after, she said to us one day, "Air that room; I will go into it, that I may die in the bed Mr. Dunster died in." From the night she went into it, she came out no more; for she died within the week. As she did not appear any worse than usual, she was at first thought to be in no danger. She said to herself two or three times, "What a blessing I am dying without pain! I have no more than I can very well bear!"

From this time we began to get rather more liberty, and one day, as my sister was on a visit at Mrs. Lefevre's, Mr. Romaine came in, and began to speak of the sinfulness of attending the playhouse. She listened with great earnestness to all he said; which repeating to me on her return, it was as *a nail in a sure place*, and I began to cry for power to stand to the light which I had then received.

A few months after this my sister married, by which I was left alone. I must observe, to this time my parents had very little suspicion of our having any intercourse with the Methodists, but thought, (when the before-mentioned servant was put away, and our books taken from

us,) that our religious impressions had worn off. I now saw the time was come, when I must *confess Christ before men*, if I would wish him to *confess me before his Father and the holy angels*. I consulted some of my serious friends about the playhouse; but they said, "Were you older, we should know what to advise, but as you are but sixteen, if your parents insist on your going, we do not see how you can avoid it." This answer did not fully satisfy me; and I was much distressed both ways. I saw the duty I owed to an absolute command from my parents in a very strong light; and, on the other hand, I remembered that my obedience to them was to be *in the Lord*. I sought direction in prayer, and endeavoured to examine the question on both sides; but the more I searched, the clearer it appeared to me I must not comply. I considered the playhouse had a tendency to weaken every Christian temper, and to strengthen all that was contrary; to represent vice under the false colour of virtue, and to lead in every respect into the spirit of the world, of which the apostle declares, *The friendship of this world is enmity with God*. When the time came, and my obedient compliance was required, I begged to be left at home. On a refusal, I laid open my whole heart to my father; apprizing him, I would not willingly be disobedient in any thing, unless where conscience made it appear to be my duty. We conversed on the subject with great freedom; for my dear father was a man of deep reason, calmness, and condescension. He replied, "Child, your arguments prove too much; and therefore are not conclusive. If what you say be true, then all places of diversion, all dress and company, nay, all agreeable liveliness, and the whole spirit of the world, is sinful." I embraced the opportunity and said, "Sir, I see it as such, and therefore am determined no more to be conformed to its customs, fashions, or maxims." This was a season of great trial, but the Lord stood by me: glory be to his holy name!

I daily discerned a great difference between my manner of life, and that which the Bible described as the life of a Christian. I had often strong desires to be wholly given to the Lord. Much opposition I met with for having declared my sentiments; and what was very cutting to me, I was often debarred from the pleasure of seeing

my friend, Mrs. Lefevre. This was the consequence I much feared, if I should openly declare my mind; but I was thoroughly convinced, if I loved my friend more than God's law, I should never know the power of true religion. It is my natural temper to be very anxious about those I love, and to fix too much of my confidence in them. This was the case with respect to Mrs. Lefevre. I saw and lamented it, beseeching the Lord to take away all *idolatry* out of my affections, and give me to love her as I ought.

I dreamed one night I was in a church, and saw written on the wall, in letters of gold, these words: *Thou shalt have no other gods but me.* While I was looking on it, I saw the name of Mrs. Lefevre wrote under it. I was surprised, and presently beheld the following line, If this is your god, then what am I? I awakened with a deep conviction that I had placed too much confidence on an arm of flesh. I knew it was the voice of God by this mark,—a great sweetness accompanied the reproof. This was the method the Lord has always used toward me; he held me up with one hand, while he smote me with the other.

In the month of June, 1756, I spent a day with Mrs. Lefevre. It was a profitable time: I found my heart very open, and told her, I believed I could give up even her to the will of God. She replied, "Nothing you could have said would have given me more satisfaction. For a long time I have thought that the thread of my life was nearly spun out. I have no clog upon my chariot wheels; but my greatest pain was for you, who have already so many trials surrounding you." This was her last address; for three days after I received a message, that she was seized with a sudden illness, and in great danger. My mother kindly permitted me to visit her; but I found her on the borders of eternity, into which, after expressing with great difficulty, "I have comforts indeed!" her happy spirit took its flight. As my time was limited, I had returned home when I received the news of her death. I went into a grove that was in our garden, to pour out my soul before the Lord. But what may seem strange, I was not permitted to feel at that

time much pain, for the Lord met me with these words, which sprang up as living water in my soul,—

“My star by night, my sun by day,
My spring of life, when parch'd with drought;
My wine to cheer, my bread to stay,
My strength, my shield, my safe abode,
My robe before the throne of God.”

I felt the Lord Jesus did answer all these characters to my soul, and by faith I beheld him as my robe before the throne of God.

When I was about seventeen years of age, my father and two brothers (younger than I) were going with some other company to see the Royal George, which was sixteen miles from the shore from whence we set out; my father desired me to accompany them. I knew not what to do, but at length believed I ought to obey. Indeed I thought I should have no farther cross than the going to the ship, and returning in the afternoon. But we had not been long in the vessel, before some of the company began to ridicule my overmuch religion. When we drew near the Royal George, the men said we must not attempt to go around her, for she was deep and very dangerous; but the gentlemen insisted they should row around the ship. While this was doing, we were in great danger, and the ladies, exceedingly alarmed, began to cry out. Some of them said, “Miss Bosanquet, why are you so calm?” I told them I saw the danger, but our business was to trust in God; I was quite ready either to sink or to be saved. My confidence in the Lord kept me secure in his providence. I had now an opportunity to speak, and they were ready to hear. When we got into the ship, it seemed like a town; such a vast variety of places like shops, were all around. We were met by Captain Burnet, who led us into a grand room; the place designed for us was pointed out by a lady that attended us. Captain Burnet proposed a dance, and after that a cold collation. Now I felt indeed. Several of the company fell upon me with, “Now, Miss Bosanquet, what will you do now? You must dance; you cannot run away.” Knowing my help must come from above, I lifted up my heart to the Lord, and cried to him for help. Presently a messenger in haste called for Captain Burnet. He ran

down, but soon returned, with great disappointment in his countenance, saying, "O what shall we do? The Prince of Wales and Admiral Anson are coming on board." Never was any thing more welcome to me than this hurry of preparing for the prince—our present king, one year older than I. My heart praised the Lord for this timely interposition. The cannon put aside the dance, and we at length talked of returning. We were let down into our little vessel, and I was truly thankful to be on the way home. But another trial soon occurred. Some of the company proposed going to Vauxhall; this I refused. "Then," said they, "you must stay in the vessel with the men." I knew not what to do. As we drew near the part where our coaches were waiting for us, a strange disagreement took place between two of the gentlemen; one of them, my brother, rose up, and bid the man draw near to the steps; he got out, and I followed him. The rest went on to Vauxhall. I was truly thankful when we got into the coach. This was the last attempt of this kind.

But this peaceful frame did not last long. Some snares were presented before me, which dissipated my mind, and cooled the fervour of my affections. In this spirit I went to London in the winter. I was now about eighteen. As I had not yet had a clear conviction to throw aside dress, while in my father's house I continued in my appearance like the company I conversed with, only I did not go with them to public diversions; and this winter I began to gain favour in their eyes, and felt myself in great danger of being carried down the stream. But the thought alarmed my soul, and caused me to look about for help. I cried to the Lord to bring me acquainted with some of the excellent of the earth, that I might learn to walk in the narrow way which leads to life and glory, and into which I saw I was scarcely entered. One day I heard a conversation concerning an extraordinary work among the Methodists, that some of them spoke of such a change being wrought on their will and affections, that they found that word to be accomplished, "Old things are passed away, and all things are become new." The remembrance of that text, "Is any thing too hard for me?" came with fresh

power to my soul? and some encouraging promises sprang up in my mind, and made me persevere in prayer. I told my serious friends, (who were not joined to the Methodists,) if they could procure me an hour's conversation with one of those pious women, I should esteem it a great favour; for I longed to see any one who would tell me of a deeper religion than I had known. I saw myself surrounded with snares, and often thought with tears on those words,—

“See where o’er desert wastes I err,
And neither food nor feeder have,
Nor fold, nor place of refuge near,
While no man cares my soul to save.”

At this time I became acquainted with a gentleman in some sense religious, though I fear not deeply so. He professed much affection for me, and my religious friends advised me to think of him, as it was likely to be very acceptable to my parents, and would open a door to more religious liberty. But I cannot say he was agreeable to me. Neither my understanding nor affection could approve the proposal; yet I was hurt by unprofitable reasonings. Sometimes I thought it might be of the Lord; at others, I could not see into it at all. While thus perplexed, I received a message from Miss Furley, (now Mrs. Downes,) that on such a day Mrs. Crosby would be at her house. I went to meet her in the spirit of prayer and expectation. She simply related what God had done for her soul. The words she spoke were clothed with power, and my convictions, of the necessity of holiness were much increased. The affair of the gentleman was obliterated from my mind; and the prospect of a life wholly devoted to God drank up every other consideration. In a few hours I returned home to our country house on Epping Forest; but such a sweet sense of God, the greatness of his love, and willingness to save to the uttermost, remained on my mind, that if I but thought on the word holiness, or of the adorable name of Jesus, my heart seemed to take fire in an instant; and my desires were more intensely fixed on God than ever I had found them before.

A few days after I wrote to Mrs. Crosby. The following is an extract:—

"Forest House, May 17, 1757.

"The Lord hath indeed been merciful above all I can ask or think. I am more drawn to prayer. I find a more earnest pursuit of holiness than ever; but what most stirs me up is, I seem to hear the Lord calling to me in these words, 'Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out hence, touch not the unclean thing; be clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord.' "

I now saw the path in which I ought to walk. I determined not to think about a married life, for my present light was to abide single. But the Lord seemed to call me to more activity, insomuch that I cried out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" I would be given up, both soul and body, to serve the members of Christ. My firm resolution was to be wholly given up to the Church in any way that he pleased. I desired not to be idle, but employed as those described by St. Paul to Timothy, "If she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, and diligently followed after every good work." I can hardly express with what power these words would come to my mind. It seemed to me the Lord had planned out all my way; and I only wished so to walk.

The end of this summer brought me a great trial. My parents were going to Scarborough. My mother offered to take me with them, if I would do as they did, and not bring a reproach on them in a strange place. This seemed a reasonable request; but I could not comply, for the spirit of the world was as contrary to that of Christ in Scarborough as in London. I requested to be left with my sister; but it was appointed for me to spend most of my time at an uncle's in London. They were exceedingly kind, and let me have much liberty. I had never before had the opportunity of a constant attendance on the means of grace; and I greatly feared abusing this talent. One of my acquaintance, being imprudent, pressed me never to be absent from any meeting, or preaching. By this means I am sensible I went too far. I walked about more than my strength could bear, having been scarce ever permitted to go out of our own grounds but in a carriage. But above all, I am pained when I think how little of Christian prudence

appeared in my conduct. The kind family in which I was received could not but blame and condemn a conduct which, though the motive was upright, was in itself sometimes wrong.

During this season I cultivated an acquaintance for which I trust I shall for ever praise the Lord. It was with Mrs. Sarah Ryan, who (with a pious woman named Mary Clark) lived in a little house in Christopher-alley, Moorfields. They both possessed the spirit of the primitive Church in an eminent degree. A few of the most lively souls in the London society were frequently gathered there. The more I saw of that family, the more I was convinced Christ had yet a pure Church below; and often, while in their company, I thought myself with the hundred and twenty that waited to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. It was at Mrs. Ryan's house that Mrs. Crosby boarded; and whenever I was from home, this was the place of my residence, and truly I found it to be a little Bethel.

The more I conversed with Mrs. Ryan, the more I discovered of the glory of God breaking forth from within, and felt a strong attraction to consider her as the friend of my soul. I told her the past sins, follies, and mercies of my life, and received a similar account from her.

The time now drew nigh for my parents' return, and I went home to receive them. While in London, I had used more exercise than my constitution could bear. My mother was much surprised when she saw me appear so ill, and laid it all to my religion. A fever came on rapidly, and I was ordered to go to bed; but I could scarcely keep on my feet while I ascended the stairs. When I was laid in bed, how shall I describe the posture of my mind? Distracted by the fever; torn by fears and temptations; and deprived of those friends who at this time could have understood and comforted me! The loss of Mrs. Lefevre now also returned on my mind with great pain. My dear parents were not aware of the nature of my illness, which was, as the apothecary afterward told them, a strong nervous fever. They thought it all arose from some trouble of mind I would not own, and told me one day, if I did not rouse myself out of

that low state, my head should be blistered, and I should be shut up in a dark room. My father being present, I said, "Will you put me in a mad house, papa?" he said, "No; but you must be shut up at home, if you do not strive against this lowness. The doctor says you have no pulse at all; he never saw a patient so low." My mind became greatly depressed; I could find no comfort of any kind, either from God or outward things.

But the Lord graciously helped me in an extraordinary way. As I lay reflecting on my situation, and weeping before him on account of the darkness of my mind, I discerned an unusual brightness, (yet not dazzling,) and a voice came so powerfully, that I can only say, I heard and felt it with every faculty of soul and body, *Thou shalt walk with me in white!* An answer seemed to come from my heart, independent of myself,* "Lord, how can that be, seeing I am not *worthy*?" It was spoken to me again, *Thou shalt walk with me in white; I will make thee worthy.* This was followed by those words, *I will thoroughly purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin!* and

"Glory is on earth begun,
Everlasting life is won."

To this day I have the most lively remembrance of that manifestation; and in the darkest moments I have since passed through, I could never doubt its being the voice of the Lord. My illness was long, and attended with many trials. Before my recovery, Mrs. Ryan was removed from London to Bristol, to be housekeeper at the room there; and much did I pray the Lord that we should be brought together again.

I was now about nineteen years of age, and soon after, my parents having an intention to go to Bath for a season, proposed that I should spend that time at Bristol, as I was now thought to be consumptive. I gladly embraced the offer, as a merciful providence. I accordingly went to Bristol, where I remained seven weeks. Mrs. Downes (late Miss Furley) showed me much kind-

* Who can account for this whole manifestation on common principles? Yet what pious mind will not conclude it was help from the Lord in the time of need?—Ed.

ness. Indeed, I was in some sense committed to her care by my parents, who had for years been acquainted with her family. I spent much of my time with Mrs. Ryan and Mrs. Clark, and I trust in some degree partook of their spirit. After my return home, I clearly discovered that I still conformed too much in my appearance to the spirit and fashions of the world; but I plainly saw a renunciation of that conformity would give my relations great offence. I loved my parents, and feared to disoblige them. I sought for arguments to quench that little spark of light which was kindling in my soul, conscious they could not see in my light, and knowing that obedience to parents was one of the first duties. I did so far quench it, that I put on again many of the things I had thrown off. My acquaintance took much notice of me, and I was so afraid of losing their good opinion, that I had no power to reprove sin, or even to refrain from joining in light or trifling conversation when in company. But I soon discerned the danger consequent on their approval, and therefore determined to weigh well what was most likely to please God, and by that to abide.

I prayed for direction, and saw clearly that plainness of dress and behaviour best became a Christian, and that for the following reasons:—

First. The apostle expressly forbids *women professing godliness to let their adorning be in apparel*; allowing them no other ornament than that of *a meek and quiet spirit*.

Secondly. I saw the reasonableness of the command, and proved it good for a proud heart to wear the plain and modest livery of God's children. .

Thirdly. It tended to open my mouth; for when I appeared like the world, in Babylonish garments, I had its esteem, and knew not how to part with it. But when I showed, by my appearance, that I considered myself as a stranger and foreigner, none can know (but by trying) what an influence it has on our whole conduct, and what a fence it is to keep us from sinking into the spirit of the world. For there is no medium: they who are conformed to the fashions, customs, and maxims of the world, must embrace the spirit also, and they shall find the esteem they seek: for the world will love its own. But

let them remember also that word, *The friendship of this world is enmity with God.*

Fourthly. I saw myself as a steward, who must render an account for every talent, and that it was my privilege to have the smiles of God on every moment of my time, or penny of money which I laid out.

Fifthly. I saw clearly that the helping my fellow creatures in their need, was both more rational, and more pleasant, than spending my substance on superfluities; and as I am commanded *to love my neighbour as myself*, and to consider all done to the household of faith as done to Christ, surely I ought not only to suffer my superfluity to give way to their necessity, but also (as occasion may require) my necessities to their extremities.

Sixthly. But it is not only the talent of money, but of time, which is thrown away by conformity to the world, entangling us in a thousand little engagements, which a dress entirely plain cuts through at once.

Seventhly. The end usually proposed by young persons in their dress is such as a devout soul would abominate. A heathen may say, It will promote my being comfortably settled in life; but I believe the Lord appoints the bounds of our habitation, and that *no good thing shall be withheld from those who walk uprightly.* I have therefore nothing to do, but to commend myself to God, in holy obedience, and to leave every step of my life to be guided by his will. I will therefore make it my rule to be clean and neat, but in the plainest things, according to my station; and whenever I thought on the subject, these words would pass through my mind with power, *For so the holy women of old adorned themselves.*

As soon as I saw my way clearly, I ventured to open my mind to my father concerning dress, as I had done before with regard to public places; entreating him to bear with me while I endeavoured to show him my reasons for refusing to be conformed to the customs, fashions, and maxims of the world. He heard me with great patience; and as I loved him tenderly, it came very near me to oppose him. My trials increased daily. I was perplexed to know how far to conform, and how far to resist. I feared, on the one hand, disobedience to my parents, and on the other, disobedience to God.

My dear mother had sometimes expressed a belief that it would be better for the family if I were removed from it, lest my brothers, who were younger than I, should be infected by my sentiments and example. Yet she did not see it clear to bid me go; but rather wished me to depart of my own accord. The furnace now became hot; but I did not dare to come out without the Lord. Indeed, could there have been any amicable agreement between us, and that I had my parents' leave to live elsewhere, I would gladly have accepted it. I even made some distant proposals of this kind, but they never saw it good to concur. Providence thus overruled my desire for wise ends: and to run away from my father's house, I could not think of. I was twenty-one years of age, and had a small fortune of my own. I saw myself on the verge of a material change, and it was easy to discern that my father's house would not long be a refuge for me; but in what manner I should be removed, or what trials I might yet have to go through, I could not tell. The continual language of my heart was, *I am oppressed: Lord, undertake thou for me.*

One day my father said to me: "There is a particular promise which I require of you; that is, that you will never, on any occasion, either now, or hereafter, attempt to make your brothers what you call a Christian." I answered, (looking to the Lord,) "I think, sir, I dare not consent to that." He replied, "Then you force me to put you out of my house." I answered, "Yes, sir, according to your views of things, I acknowledge it; and, if I may but have your approval, no situation will be disagreeable." He replied, "There are many things in your present situation which must be, I should think, very uncomfortable." This I acknowledged, and added that if he would but say he approved of my removal, I would take a lodging which I had heard of at Mrs. Gold's, in Hoxton-square; but that no suffering could incline me to leave him, except by his free consent. He replied with some emotion, "I do not know that you ever disobliged me wilfully in your life, but only in these fancies; and my children shall always have a home in my house." As I could not but discern a separation would take place, (though I knew not how nor when,) I judged it most

prudent to take the lodgings, that in case I should be suddenly removed, I might have a home to go to ; which I preferred to the going into any friend's house as a visiter. I also hired a sober girl, to be ready whenever I might want her. I informed my mother, a short time after, of the steps I had taken. She gave me two beds, one for myself, and a little one for my maid ; and appeared to converse on it in a way of approval. Something, however, seemed to hold us, on both sides, from bringing it to the point.

For the next two months I suffered much ; my mind was exercised with many tender and painful feelings. One day my mother sent me word, "I must go home to my lodgings that night." I went down to dinner, but they said nothing on the subject ; and I could not begin it. The next day, as I was sitting in my room, I received again the same message. During dinner, however, nothing was spoken on the subject. When it was over, I knew not what to do. I was much distressed. I thought, if they go without saying any thing to me, I cannot go ; and if they should not invite me to come and see them again, how shall I bear it ? My mind was pressed down with sorrow by this suspense. Just as they were going out, my mother said, "If you will, the coach, when it has set us down, may carry you home to your lodging." My father added, "And we shall be glad to see you to dinner next Tuesday." This was some relief. I remained silent. When the coach returned, I ordered my trunk into it ; and struggling with myself, took a kind of leave of each of the servants, as they stood in a row in tears, in my way out of the house. About eight o'clock I reached my lodging.

It consisted of two rooms, as yet unfurnished. I had neither candle nor any convenience. The people of the house I had never seen before, only I knew them by character to be sober persons. I borrowed a table and a candlestick, and the window seat served me as a chair. When bolting the door, I began to muse on my present situation.

I am, said I, but young—only entered into my twenty-second year. I am cast out of my father's house. *I know the heart of a stranger ;* but, alas ! how much more of it

may I yet have to prove! I cried unto the Lord, and found a sweet calm overspread my spirit. I could in a measure act faith on these words: "When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, the Lord shall take thee up." The following reflections also arose in my mind: I am now exposed to the world, and know not what snares may be gathering around me. I have a weak understanding, and but little grace. Therefore, now, before any snare has entangled me, I shall form a plan for my future conduct, and endeavour to walk thereby. First, I will not receive visits from single men, and in order to evade the trial more easily, I will not get acquainted with any; I will, as much as possible, refrain from going into any company where they are. Secondly, I will endeavour to lay out my time by rule, that I may know each hour what is to be done: nevertheless, I will cheerfully submit to have these rules broken or overturned, whenever the providence of God thinks fit to do so. And thirdly, I will endeavour to fix my mind on the example of Jesus Christ, and to lead a mortified life; remembering, "He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

The prejudices of education are strong, especially in those persons who have been brought up rather in high life. The being removed from a parent's habitation seemed very awful. I looked on myself as being liable to a deep reproach, and trembled at the thought. But I remembered that word, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me."

My maid being now come, and having lighted a fire in the other room, and borrowed a few things of the family, she begged me to come into it, as the night was very cold. And now my captivity seemed turning every moment. That thought, I am brought out of the world; I have nothing to do but *to be holy, both in body and spirit*, filled me with consolation. Thankfulness overflowed my heart; and such a spirit of peace and content poured into my soul, that all about me seemed a little heaven.

Some bread, with rank salt butter, and water to drink, made me so comfortable a meal, that I could truly say, *I ate my meat with gladness and singleness of heart*. As the bed was not put up, I laid that night almost on the ground, and the windows having no shutters, and it being a bright

moonlight night, the sweet solemnity thereof well agreed with the tranquillity of my spirit. I had now daily more and more cause for praise. I was acquainted with many of the excellent of the earth, and my delight was in them. Yet I was not without my cross ; for every time I went to see my dear parents, what I felt when, toward night, I rose up to go away, cannot well be imagined. Not that I wished to abide there ; but there was something in bidding farewell to those under whose roof I had always lived, that used to affect me much, though I saw the wise and gracious hand of God in all ; and that he had by this means set me free for his own service. From my heart I thanked him as the gracious author, and them as the profitable instruments, of doing me so great a good. My mother was frequently giving me little things ; and every renewed mark of kindness made the wound to bleed afresh.

There was, in the years sixty-one and sixty-two, a very great revival among the societies, both in London and many other places ; and an earnest desire was stirred up in many hearts after full salvation. Prayer was made without ceasing by the faithful, " That the glory of God might go forth as brightness ; and his salvation as a lamp that burneth." These prayers were answered in a very powerful manner. The Spirit was poured out on some in such a degree as can hardly be conceived, but by those who felt the Divine influence. Not only Mr. Wesley and Mr. Maxfield were in an uncommon manner blessed in their preaching ; but many simple persons, both men and women, were lively harbingers of the approaching pentecost, and cried aloud, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand !* The mighty power of God was seen on every side ! Christ was held out as a complete Saviour ; and represented to the eye of faith as crying out on this festal day, " If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink ; he that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." These rivers did, indeed, flow from heart to heart. The gift of victorious faith was given to many, not only for themselves but others. A clear light shone on these truths : " They that are in Christ are new creatures ; old things are passed away, and all things become new. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." The whole

soul, with every faculty, shall be so *brought into subjection to Christ*, as to feel, *I live not, but Christ liveth in me!*

Some portion of this river seemed now to reach me also. The means of grace were as marrow to my soul; and often these words were applied: *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth*. But I could not believe so as to give up my whole heart to the Lord. I knew him mine, but other things had yet life in me, though not dominion over me. I was now assured the blessing of sanctification (or, in other words, a heart entirely renewed) could not be received but by simple, naked faith;* and my soul groaned out its desire in these words:—

“That mighty faith on me bestow,
Which cannot ask in vain;
Which holds, and will not let thee go,
Till I my suit obtain.”

One day, as a few of us were praying together at brother Gilford's, we were so drawn out, that we were, I think, four hours engaged, when I really thought we had not been above one; and this was frequently the case with us. Another day, as I was at a meeting for prayer at a friend's house, when he had continued some time, I seemed as if I had lost all. Deep discouragement seized my spirit; but I wrestled on, and was in an agony to *love God with all my heart*. Brother Gilford was praying for me, when in a moment I felt a calmness overspread my spirit, and by faith I laid hold on Jesus, as my full Saviour. I said in my heart, *Thy will be done! Thy will be done!* and in that I felt my rest. In the same moment brother Gilford changed prayer into praise, telling the Lord he had heard and answered: he had set me at liberty, and now he would praise him. This surprised me, as I had not given the least sign, by either word or motion, of what I had felt within. He concluded his prayer with that act of praise. He asked me how I felt myself? I answered, I could not fully tell; but that I found that the love of the will of God had brought an unspeakable peace into my soul: but that I did not feel joy; only a rest in that thought, *The Lord reigneth, and his will shall be done*. As I was walking

* By simple faith, I mean, taking God at his word without reasoning; and by naked faith, I mean, stripped of every other dependence but on Christ alone.

home, I found the presence of the Lord to be with me. He seemed to say, *Round thee and beneath thee are spread the everlasting arms.* I felt they were so, and my faith seemed to gather strength continually.

Yet for some days I was much exercised with temptation, and continually accused, that I had thought, said, or done something amiss.* But after a little time I found a more solid rest; and sensibly felt my will and affections were fixed on God, and most powerfully was I penetrated with these words:—

“Their daily delight shall be in his name,
They shall, as their right, his righteousness claim;
His righteousness wearing, and cleansed by his blood,
Bold shall they appear in the presence of God!”

One night I awaked with much of the presence of God, when these words were powerfully applied, *Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.* That promise also dwelt on my mind, *In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be thy strength.*

I believe what I felt at this season was a low degree of pure love; or what we call a *clean heart*. But though it was in a small degree, yet did it evidence itself by a mighty change. I had many temptations, and not much joy. Yet did I never feel any thing contrary to love; and in the temptations with which I was attacked, I felt a great difference. Satan never attempted to draw my affections, neither to move me to anger, for there I could have answered him, *Thou hast nothing in me*;† but I was followed with such a sense of sorrow as I cannot express. The fear of living to fall from grace, and sin against God, tore me at intervals, for some minutes, as one on a rack. Then a turn of the eye, by faith, on Jesus, would make my enemies flee. Another cause of sorrow was—something I am at a loss to describe, but it seemed most exquisite feelings were opened in my soul, such as I never knew before. If I saw or heard of the consequences of sin, I was ready to die! For instance,—if in the street I saw a child ill used or slighted by the person who seemed to have the care of it, or a poor person sweating under an uncom-

* A strong mark of the reality of the work.—ED.

† His strength lay in applying the law to a conscience so tender.—ED.

monly heavy burden ; or if I saw a horse, or a dog, oppressed or wounded, it was more than I could bear. I seemed to groan and travail in birth, as it were, for the whole creation. Yet notwithstanding all these painful feelings, I had a solid peace. I always felt I committed my all to Jesus, and I lived on his faithfulness. As I observed before, anger seemed in my soul to know its place no more. Neither did I find an attachment to any creature, or thing, but such as reflected from the will of God. Such a sense of purity dwelt on my soul as I can hardly describe. I often felt the power of those words, *Unto the pure, all things are pure*. I sometimes thought I should not care if my breast was as a window, and if every thought was without a covering to man as it was to God. A little degree of heavenly wisdom was also let down into my heart. Being fixed on a solid rock, I was not so easily shaken ; and those words were powerfully applied, "Thou shalt not be afraid for any evil tidings, for thy heart standeth fast, believing in the Lord." But above all, I felt such a simplicity, such a hanging on the Lord Jesus, that self seemed annihilated, and Jesus was my all. The nothing into which I felt myself sunk, and the great salvation I seemed to possess in Jesus, were such as I cannot explain. I used often to say, It appears to me that unbelief cannot find a place in my soul to set its foot upon. And indeed it could not ; for slavish fear seemed quite cast out. I could say, "I live not, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God." I was truly nothing, and all my salvation came through *faith in the Son of God*. He was my soul's delight ; and I felt if I could have been saved any other way, I would not have accepted it. O how often was that word in my mouth and heart !

"Having done all, by faith I stand,
And give the praise, O Lord, to thee ;
Thy holy arm, thy own right hand,
Hath got thyself the victory."*

All this time the Lord kept me, as to outward things, like an infant in its mother's arms. I put in practice my first resolution, and had no other thought but of devoting my-

* Who can deny this great salvation without denying the truth and power of God ? But O ! how few seek it !—ED.

self to God in a single life : only I remember I sometimes thought, were I to be married to Mr. Fletcher,* would he not be rather a help, than a hinderance to my soul ? But it was only a thought, and had arisen from what some friends said to me on the subject.

As I desired to be the Lord's, and to spend all I had to his glory, I sometimes carried this desire too far, and did not allow myself quite what was needful. My exercises were greater than I had been used to, and I was seized with a complaint in my bowels. I thought if I had some spice boiled in water, and port wine with it, it would help me, but I was unwilling to get it. However my heavenly Father took care for that. He knows what we have need of before we ask ; for at that very time a relation called, and brought me a quantity of spice as a present ; and the very next day my father called in his chariot, and brought me a hamper of port wine, neither of them knowing any thing of my wants ! I therefore received it as immediately from the Lord. And I could give a variety of instances of the same nature. It seemed I could hardly think of a thing, but it was brought to me. O how true is that promise, "What is given up for God, shall be restored manifold in this present life." Before the Lord made me to wander from my father's house, a particular person used to upbraid me with that reflection, "You will soon find the difference between your father's house and such poking holes as you will live in. There you will not have one inch but the common street : whereas you have been used to large and fine gardens, in which you much delighted. And how tired you will be of such trash as you provide, instead of the plentiful provision of his table. Before you have lived so for six months, I will engage you will wish yourself back again, and your religion out of the way."

But was it so ? O Lord, thou knowest ! "Thou didst feed me as with the finest wheat flour, and with water out of the stony rock didst thou satisfy me." All I could want, all I could desire, was bountifully supplied. When I have sometimes been reflecting on my situation, inward and outward, I have remembered that word, *The meek shall*

* At that time Mr. Wesley's assistant in London.

inherit the earth. Glory be to thee, O Lord, thou hast meekened my spirit, and thou makest me to possess all things. Often I have said, in amazement, What can I fear? I have no desire: the will of God swallows up all! My Jesus and my all! my Jesus and my all for ever!

PART THE SECOND.

HER REMOVAL TO LAYTONSTONE.

I EXPERIENCED daily more and more of the tender care of the Almighty; and often felt these words with power:—

“No fondest parent’s anxious breast
Yearns like thy God’s to make thee blest.”

Every want was supplied before I could ask it; nay, many times before I was conscious of the want. My maid was but dull and ignorant, though a good girl; and I knew little more of the world than she did, having been used to so different a way of life. My health, and many concerns, needed a care I did not know how to take. But if at any time such an idea would offer to my mind, I checked it in a moment with that thought,—I have the Gospel: I have freedom to serve God: I have spiritual blessings. What more can I need? And truly I rather saw than felt my wants. Nevertheless, now and then I have said, Would not a steady faithful friend be a great advantage to me? One who could lead me into a deeper acquaintance with God? But I sought it not: all my cares on him were cast, and in his will I found my resting place, and *in quietness and confidence was my strength.*

At this juncture I received a letter from Mrs. Ryan, informing me she was coming up to London. She had left Bristol Room some time before, her health not permitting her to continue in that place. She informed me she was settled in a lodging, but she saw it her duty to come up to London a few months for my sake; “for I reap (said she) of your substance, and so do many; but the Lord shows me that at present you suffer for the

want of a friend, (referring to what I had written to her,) and I think he has ripened and confirmed that solid spark of friendship, which was so long ago kindled in our breasts towards each other. It seems to me as if the Lord had laid your burden on me, as he once committed the care of Mary to Joseph, and afterward to the favorite disciple." She concluded :—

"Jesus, to thy preserving care
My choicest blessing I commend ;
Receive, and on thy bosom bear
The soul whom thou hast made my friend."

I spread my friend's letter before the Lord, and praised him for laying my burden on the heart of one whom I knew to be a favourite of Heaven. I answered that I should be very glad to see her. She had not been long at her sister's before she was seized with a violent disorder, which we thought would end in death. I visited her often, and with much profit. Mrs. M. being taken ill also, and only one servant to attend them both, I believed it my duty to be with her night and day ; and the Lord gave me such strength and ability for it, as I had never found before. I felt his peculiar smile on my employment, and those words which had formerly made such an impression on my mind were now continually before me :—

"O that my Lord would count me meet
To wash his dear disciples' feet ;
After my lowly Lord to go,
And wait upon his saints below :
Enjoy the grace to angels given,
And serve the royal heirs of heaven."

As she slept little, we conversed much ; and our hearts were united as David's and Jonathan's. The spirit of community which reigned in the Church at Jerusalem I felt a taste of ; and from that time to her death, the cold words of *mine* and *thine* were never known between us. A circumstance which now occurred unexpectedly constrained her to remove. I took her home with me, but not till I had inquired of the Lord, well knowing how much the progress of the Divine life depends on our private connections. Unless much caution is used between persons living together, they are often a great hinderance to each other.

After a time the Lord was pleased to restore her to health ; and having one heart, one mind, and one purse, we agreed that one habitation also would be most profitable. The Lord had given us to feel that union which even death itself could not dissolve. I have often thought on those words of Solomon, "A faithful friend is the medicine of life ; and he that fears the Lord shall find him." Some however objected : "Your income is as yet but small ; you wish to be useful ; why then did you not choose, as a friend, one who had some fortune to unite with your own, and that might have enlarged your sphere." I answered, I did not choose at all. I stood still, saw, and followed the order of God. And if my means had been enlarged in money, and lessened in grace, what should I have gained by that ? I acknowledge I neither gained honour, gold, nor indulgence to the flesh, by uniting myself to a sickly persecuted saint ; but I gained such a spiritual helper as I shall eternally praise God for. Many are the advocates of friendship. Many will say, with Dr. Young,

"Poor is the friendless master of a world.
A world in purchase for a friend is gain."

But they refuse the sacrifice demanded by that friendship, and forget the following lines :—

"But for whom blossoms this elysian flower ?
Can gold gain friendship ? Impudence of hope !
As well mere man an angel might beget.
Love, and love only, is the loan for love.
Delusive pride repress,—
Nor hope to find a friend, but who hath found
A friend in thee."

We continued together at Hoxton some time. When I was about twenty-three, the people of Laytonstone were much laid on my mind. I had both my birth and maintenance from that place, and I could not help thinking I owed something to their souls. Yet I saw the way very difficult. My parents permitted me to be often with them, and seemed pretty well reconciled to my manner of life, while at a distance. But how, thought I, will it appear in their eyes, to bring the preachers they so much object to, within a mile of their house ? I thought I should not now be called to offend them any farther.

Cannot the Lord, if he sees good, send the Gospel to those people some other way? Thus I put it from my mind again and again; yet a strange love for those souls in that place would spring up in my heart; and when I said, *Lord, send by whom thou wilt send, but not by me!* those words again presented themselves, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me."

About this time a house of my own at Laytonstone became untenanted. My friend as well as myself saw many reasons for our removing to that place. We prayed much about it, and I asked the Lord to show us clearly his will; and at length felt from the Lord, first, a liberty to believe that if my father did absolutely forbid my coming, I was not required to do it. Secondly, I knew God did not require impossibilities: I had not yet an income sufficient for living in that place. I asked, therefore, as a farther mark, the settling an affair which kept me out of part of my fortune, occasioned by a flaw in the making of my grandmother's will. I had taken some pains about this affair before, but to no purpose. However, I slightly mentioned it again, and it was settled directly. Then I made known to my father my thought about living at Laytonstone. I used no deception; but told him plainly the end I proposed in so doing, my mother being present. He made not the least objection, only added with a smile, "If a mob should pull your house about your ears, I cannot hinder them." We waited before the Lord, believing it was his call, and held ourselves in readiness for immediate obedience. One night I dreamed I was in one of my houses there, in company with all kinds of people, rich and poor, most of whom appeared very ungodly. It was strongly impressed on my mind to speak to them, but I started from the thought, and said, with emotion, Lord, what do I here among this people; for they are not thy people, and what am I to do with them? I then beheld the Lord Jesus stand as just before me. The awful majesty of his presence had such an effect on me as I cannot express! It seemed to me I sunk down before him as if I were sweetly melting into nothing. I saw no shining brightness, or any thing dazzling to the eye. He appeared only as a man clothed in white; yet to my mind there was what I cannot put

into words. It was a sense of his purity! It was the glory of holiness which so overcame me! There seemed but about one yard distance between my Saviour and me—when he spake, with a voice clear and distinct, these words: “I will send thee to a people that are not a people, and I will go with thee. Bring them unto me, for I will lay my hand upon them, and heal them. Fear not, only believe!”

When the immediate presence of my Lord was withdrawn, I thought that I repeated with tears to the people what he had spoken to me. Many mocked and derided; but a few expressed a desire of being separated from the others to hear the word. I endeavoured to find a place to meet them in, and in order to do so, I was constrained to walk over a piece of building, where the floor did not seem thicker than a wafer. When I had passed it, I looked back, and said, Not a splinter has given way under my feet. Turning my face toward the lane, I saw a funeral, and awaked with that word powerfully applied, *The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* I found myself in a sweet delightful peace. Soul and body seemed all attracted into a Divine harmony. When sufficiently come to myself to speak, I told sister Ryan, (who slept with me,) all that had passed. She replied: “This night, both sleeping and waking, I have been much occupied with these words: *I will go before you, and humble the great ones of the earth.*”

This was in the year sixty-three. On March the 24th, the same year, we removed to Laytonstone. From the first hour we found much of the presence of God; and stood still to see his salvation. In order to supply the want of public means, (which we could not have but when we went to London,) we agreed to spend an hour every night together in spiritual reading and prayer. A poor woman, with whom I had formerly talked, came to ask if she might come in when we made prayer? We told her, at seven every Thursday night she should be welcome. She soon brought two or three more, and they others, till in a short time our little company increased to twenty-five. One night, just before the time of meeting, a poor woman called with a basket of cakes to sell. On our refusing to buy any, she stood still a long time at the gate.

We began to converse with her about her soul, when she expressed a great desire to stay to the meeting; and in so doing was so greatly blessed, that she would fain have left us part of her goods in return. We now thought it would be well to converse with each in particular, and that the time was come for it. Some few were offended, and came no more; but most appeared under conviction, and those we appointed to meet on Tuesday night, reserving the Thursday for the public meeting, which still kept increasing, and in which we read a chapter, and sometimes spoke from it.

The first time we met on Tuesday night two were set at liberty. We now thought it expedient to apply to Mr. Wesley for a preacher. He approved our plan, and sent Mr. Murlin the next Sunday; and within a fortnight we had twenty-five joined in society. Much opposition now arose from all sides, (though more from the rich than the poor,) and one Thursday night, as I was speaking to a pretty large company in my own kitchen, the bell at the fore gate was rung very hard. Our servant, who was a pious woman, went to see who was there. In the meantime four shabby looking men, with great sticks in their hands, came in at the back door, and so into the kitchen. The servant soon returned with some emotion, and whispered me: "It is Mr. W., who is come to inform you, you must if you please break off, for here is a great mob coming; and the ringleaders are four men with clubs." Turning to the people, I answered her aloud, "O, we do not mind mobs, when we are about our Master's business." *Greater is he that is for us, than all that can be against us.* I then went on till I had concluded my subject. Having a few of the rules of the society which I intended to disperse that night, I addressed myself first to the four men, who stood before me, explaining what they were, and asked if they would choose to accept one? They received them with a respectful bow, and went out. Who they were, and what was their purpose, I know not to this day. We heard no more of the mob. At this time the hand of the Lord was much with us, supporting and comforting us under every trial. There was only my friend Ryan, myself, the maid, and Sally Lawrence, a child about four years old, whom I had

just before taken from the side of her mother's coffin into our house. On one side it was open to the forest, and I know not that one of the awakened people lived within a mile of us. We were as on a desert alone ; but the Lord was with us, and preserved us beneath his love's almighty shade. The enemy came, however, to the length of his chain. Sometimes on Sundays, when the nights were dark, after the society meeting, a mob used to collect at the gate, and throw dirt at the people as they went out ; and when they were gone, they used to come into the yard, break some trifles they found there, and putting up their faces to a window which had no shutters, roar and howl like wild beasts.

And now another dispensation was opening before us. From the time I was seventeen, some drawing toward the care of children had dwelt on my mind. I felt the same desire now as at that time to become in every sense a servant to the Church. Those words were still with me : "If she have lodged strangers ; if she have brought up children ; if she have relieved the afflicted ; and diligently followed after every good work." Yet I was truly sensible no work was good but as being done in the will and order of God. We therefore entreated the Lord to discover to us all his sacred will from day to day, and not suffer us in any degree to err therefrom.

Various leadings of Providence, both inward and outward, drew us to think of the rising generation with more than common tenderness. Our abilities were small ; yet perhaps a few children we could educate, without interrupting the order of God in our call toward the grown people. We determined, however, to take none but destitute orphans, that no one might interrupt our plan of education. We were not unconscious that to change the heart belongs to God, but at the same time we remembered there was a blessing promised to "the training up a child in the way it should go," and that a degree of knowledge, with a capacity of getting their bread in an honest way, has, under God, rescued many from destruction. Some such objects now presented themselves, and we received them, one after another, in the name of the Lord. We however, refused many, taking

only those concerning whom there appeared a particular call of Providence.

For a good while, our family consisted of one servant, six orphans, and ourselves; but we found it took up too much of our time to have the whole care of them alone; especially as my friend Ryan was often confined by illness. We therefore took a pious young woman, named Ann Tripp, who desired to devote herself to God, in a closer walk than the generality of believers. She was placed as governess over the children, whose number continued to increase. Some serious women were also added to our household, and each had their duties and employments assigned them. In the whole we received thirty-five children, and thirty-four grown persons, but not all at one time.

We now found work enough on our hands, and wished to free ourselves from all needless cares. As well, therefore, to answer that end, as to avoid conformity to the world, we thought it best to have but one dress. We fixed on a dark purple cotton, of which we had many pieces stamped; and ourselves with the whole family wore nothing else. We had a large hall, and in it a table five yards long, at which we ate together. There also we assembled for morning and evening devotion, and on several other occasions. But, in general, the children were in the nursery, and the other sisters in their own apartments.

When my family began thus to increase, I must acknowledge it was by no means proportionate to my income, but it appeared to me I had a peculiar call from the Lord to take the steps I did; and we began with a degree of the same spirit which is expressed in a book entitled, "The Footsteps of Divine Providence;" giving an account of the orphan house at Halle, in Germany, raised by Professor Francke.

This plan I would advise none to follow, unless they felt what I did; for certainly justice goes before charity; and there is very seldom a real call from God to give more than we have. But it must be observed, though my income was inadequate to the undertaking, I had a considerable capital. So that I was not at present in danger of debt. The risk I ran was, of spending my capital, and

being left without a maintenance. But the Lord seemed to assure me I should not thus be deserted, and that by many and various ways.

We now set ourselves to inquire of the Lord, how we should train up these children to his glory : and a few out of many reflections which occurred to my mind, I will endeavour to set down. But I must observe, first, as most of our children were naked, full of vermin, and some afflicted with distempers, the first thing was to clean and clothe them, and attend to their health ; which usually was followed with much success. At the same time, we endeavoured to bring them to an outward conformity of manners to the rules of the house, and to some courtesy of behaviour. This was not difficult, as a child naturally falls in with what it sees in others. The second attempt was, to fix on their minds that we had no motives in receiving them into our house, but that of love ; love to their souls and bodies. We wished to save their bodies from misery, and their souls from eternal destruction.

With respect to the strangers, we endeavoured to lead them to a view of the love of God, observing it was his love which caused ours. He put it into our heart, he brought them in our way, and from *his* hand came their every blessing. That the end of the Lord in bringing them into our house, was to learn that great truth, that they should never die. Their bodies must die, and rest in the grave ; but they themselves would be for ever alive, and hear, see, think, and know ; feel pleasure, or pain, and that for ever. We inculcated that the end of their learning this lesson was to make them happy, and prevent their being miserable, since in a very short space of time they must enter into the one or the other state, and that to all eternity.

We continually impressed on the minds of the children, that the only way to be happy was to be like God ; to love what he loved, and to hate what he hated ; but that was not their present state. They were now like the devil, and loved what he loved. If they were injured, they loved to revenge, and could hardly forget the offence any one offered them. When angry, they would cry and sob, and be almost choked ; but when did they find themselves so affected in thinking about the Lord Jesus ? Did *his* love

and sufferings come again and again to their mind, so that they could not forget them? And when did they cry and sob, because they had sinned against so good a God? It was plain, therefore, they were as yet the devil's children, and their minds and affections obeyed him only. We therefore declared, that whenever we saw these marks of the devil's power on their hearts, we would tell them of it; but if they would still obey him rather than God, we would then add unto our words correction; making them feel pain, that the impression might be strong, and more lasting; and that they must never resent nor resist those corrections, for it was more painful for us to give, than it could be for them to receive them. But seeing it was for their profit, and our duty to do it, they must take each correction not only with patience, but thankfulness; for we should make it a point of conscience, never to correct, or even to contradict them, but with consideration and prayer, having always that lesson before our eyes,

"That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me."

Nor were these observations altogether without fruit; for I do not remember one child I ever had, that if we ordered her to receive correction by the rod, (which was not often,) would not lie down in silence as a lamb, and afterward, yea, immediately after, come and kiss us. We observed, that all our instructions would avail them nothing, unless their hearts were changed; and that none but Jesus Christ could do that; but he was ready and willing, and assuredly would do it, if they cried to him for it.

From the above hints, various occasions presented to point out the nature of salvation through Christ alone, and the necessity of a renewed nature, in order to be capable of the enjoyment of heaven.

One day a little beggar girl, whom we had taken in about a week before, showed some of the vicious dispositions which had been nursed up in her by evil company. On repetition, she received correction. When the children were alone, (as they thought,) she began to complain of her hard fate, saying, "If they love us, why do they whip us?" A little one about six years old replied, "Why, it is because they love us, and it is to make us remember

what a sad thing sin is ; and God would be angry with them if they did not do so. Do you not remember the chapter my mistress read about Eli ?” Indeed I had various proofs that it is not so hard a thing to convince the judgment of children as some may think ; and a right judgment is a good step toward right affections.

As we intended them to work for their bread, either as servants or in little trades, we endeavoured as early as possible to inure them to labour, early rising, and cleanliness. The eldest of the children arose between four and five, the younger not much later. At half an hour after six we had family prayer. At seven, we breakfasted together on herb tea, or milk porridge. The small children then went into the garden till eight. At eight the bell rang for school, which continued till twelve. Then, after a few minutes spent in prayer, they came down to us ; at which time we either walked out with them, or, if the weather did not permit, we found them some employment in the house, endeavouring at the same time to give them both instruction and recreation. We invented various employments for those hours, in order to remove the appearance of idleness, as from the first we endeavoured to impress that lesson on their minds : “An idle person is the devil’s cushion, on which he rolls at pleasure.” Likewise, that in the choice of their employments, they should always prefer those that were most useful, and be always able to render a reason for every thing they did. At one we dined ; about two the bell rang again for school, and at five they returned to us, and were employed as before till supper time. Then, after family prayer, they were washed, and put to bed by eight. Four or five of the bigger girls were each week kept out of the school by turns, and employed in housework, cooking, &c, that they might be accustomed to every sort of business ; and there was work enough in so large a family. Several of the children were very young, though I do not remember we had any under two years, except one of about a month old, which was laid, very neatly dressed, one night late at our door ; but it lived only a fortnight, being full of humours, too probably derived from its parents.

We now found a great need of wisdom and patience. We had, I think, never more than ten grown persons in

the family at one time, who were not invalids ; nor do I ever remember above five or six altogether in health. The children, also, for the first few years, laboured under various disorders ; for we did not refuse either old or young on account of being sick and helpless : in the end all recovered who came in infirm. We sometimes had much to do ; for the care of the sick, the management of eighteen or twenty children, with various meetings, and the needful attention to the work of God in a new raised society ; with the reception of the number of strangers who visited us on spiritual accounts, occasioned those of us who had the work of God at heart, a good deal of labour and suffering.

Various reproaches now began to roll upon us. It was reported that we intended to bring up these children for nuns ; that we were too rigid and exact to our own rules. Some objected, it is all carnal wisdom ; you cannot change their hearts, and education will only make them more guilty before God. Others, that we were idle, and buried ourselves alive, because we did not live at London. But the reproach that came the nearest to me was this—She talks of the poverty of the holy Jesus, (alluding to a little book I had printed,)—let us see her work at a trade as he did, and that would make her fortune go farther. Would any one with such a capital live only on the interest, when by trade they might double it every year ? Several came and talked with me on the subject ; saying, If you do not go into some business, you will be brought to the parish in your old age. I replied, I understand no business ; and I fear to lose what I have, instead of increasing it. They replied again, Then ask light of them who do understand it. Take some partner ; let such have the care, and you find the money. I was wearied with letters and disputes on this head. However, I laid it before the Lord ; and felt I was willing, if it would glorify him, to sweep the kennels. It may seem strange why any thus interfered in our affairs ; but our undertaking was new, and quite out of the common way. This drew all sorts of company, of various sects and denominations. Some loved me, and wished to bring me over to what they thought the better way. Others were moved by curiosity ; some by the love of dispute, others by interest, offering their assistance ;

and some, perhaps, by that spirit which the seed of the serpent will always manifest. But another, and perhaps the chief reason was, I believe, the order of a wise and gracious Providence. I was called to walk wholly by faith; indeed it appeared a strange call, and, humanly speaking, could end no way but in a prison. I was therefore permitted to have every kind of discouragement, and to be brought into many and deep perplexities, that the faithfulness of God might shine more conspicuous, as will be seen in the sequel.

But to return to the children. When actual sin was committed at any time, (minor faults were generally overlooked,) it was set down on paper by sister Tripp, and presented in a meeting held every Friday at twelve o'clock. The whole family were called together at that time, and after praying for the light and presence of the Lord, we entered into a consultation how to prevent a relapse into the same crime; and that the displeasure of the Almighty might be removed, we always endeavoured to make our reasons appear clear before we either acquitted or condemned. Very frequently there appeared a spirit of repentance, so that the exhortation was followed by forgiveness. We then spent some time together in a family meeting, of which I will speak more particularly in another place.

One day a sweet little child, about seven years old, (who I hope at this time both fears and loves God,) had stolen something. We consulted what must be done to prevent a repetition of her sin. At these times we always adapted our conversation to the capacity of the little criminal. One said, I have read in the Bible, that the offending member ought to be cut off, and cast away. This gave rise to several useful reflections; after which we agreed there were but three ways, either to cut off the offender from the family, or to pray to God to bring her to repentance, or leave her in her sins. After some conversation with her, the second was agreed on; and we joined in prayer that the Lord would graciously interpose and save her. The meeting being that day in the evening instead of the usual time, as soon as it was over they were sent up to be washed in order to go to bed. (This was on June the 7th, 1764.) Betty Lawrence, about

eleven years old, had been much affected while we were talking to H. O., the child above mentioned. She had shown some concern a few days before, when I was speaking of the spirituality of the commandments. The children being alone, and not knowing they were overheard, Betty said, "Let us pray for Hannah's soul!" She then prayed in a very affecting manner. Afterward, one about eight years old pleaded much for the forgiveness of Hannah's sin; but added, Lord, do not let us think so much about her sin as to forget our own. Lord, do not let us laugh and trifle, and talk of foolish things as soon as we rise off our knees; but make us Christians. Another then thanked God for their good corrections and teachings, and said, If we are not Christians, we shall be more punished than others. After some time sister Tripp went in to see them to bed; but first went to prayer with them for a few minutes. The spirit of conviction now fell on Betty Lawrence in an extraordinary manner. We came up, and found her in a great agony; she was the very picture of terror. The veins of her neck were as if they would burst. She wrung her hands, and cried with a bitter cry, O my sins! O my sins! I believe more than a hundred times. She then broke out into such a confession of her original corruption and actual sins as quite amazed us; adding, O! I have never done any thing to please thee in all my life. I have broken all thy laws; I have not kept thy commandments; Lord, I have kept the devil's commandments! May such a wretch come to thee, Lord? Wilt thou receive me, Lord? Wilt thou pardon me? Wilt thou make me a Christian? Tell me, Lord, shall I go to heaven or hell? Wilt thou make me a Christian? Wilt thou pardon all my sins? She then paused awhile, her eyes fixed upward, and her face as in a flame; then added, but with a softer voice, Yes, he will, he will! But wilt thou, Lord? Yes, thou wilt, thou wilt! Mr. Dornford being that night with us, gave out a hymn; she now seemed quite calm. The horror which before appeared on her countenance was gone, and had left a sweet smile. After remaining some time in this posture, she said, Jesus is smiling upon me! She afterward told us, she had a view as of Christ upon the cross, smiling upon her, and saying, "I have pardoned all your sins, and if you pray, I

will give you abundant love." She then broke out, O! what a sweet Saviour he is! He hath forgiven me all my sins! All, all, Lord! Thou hast, thou wilt forgive them. But, O Lord, let them be perfectly forgiven. But shall I ever sin again? Shall I ever sin again? O! do not let me sin again! O! what a sweet Saviour thou art! What sweet love is thine! O! more such love as thine! more such love as thine! But do not let me sin again! Fill me with love, that I may not sin again! We were the more surprised at this, because she was a child of a remarkably dull apprehension, and had no liberty in expressing herself on any subject. But striking as the scene was, (far more so than I can describe,) it was nothing to the change that followed. She was naturally of a very bad temper, but now it might indeed be said,—

"Love made her willing feet
In swift obedience move."

So great was the change, in both understanding and will, as plainly declared the hand that had wrought it.

The Lord was pleased at this season to give his word success, both among the people who attended the preaching, and in the family. But our house was too strait, and needed some enlargement, and a good deal of repairs. It therefore occurred to my mind, as we had so many visitors, to take another step, and put up a poor's box, like Professor Francke, in Germany. But I found some difficulty. I thought, my relations will object to it; and, in short, I found it more easy to give than to receive. But I saw the order of God in the plan, and that was enough. Accordingly we put it up in the hall, with this inscription, "For the maintenance of a few poor orphans, that they may be brought up in the fear of the Lord." Difficulties now began to gather as clouds about us. Workmen must be paid; a family far too large for my income to support; with a variety of expenses in carrying on the work, assisting their poverty, &c. One day it was suggested, Surely I am wrong; God will not appear for me in this undertaking. I told my mind to some friends, who said, "This is the very thing we always saw; you will find in the end it is all a delusion. In two or three years you will turn out all these people and children to the wide world; and in your old age you will be without the ne

cessaries of life." I heard them with attention, and only replied, "If it be a delusion, I meant well, believing it to be the will of God."

I carried it to the Lord in prayer, when the following thoughts were impressed on my mind: If Christ was now upon earth, and in want of food and raiment, should I be afraid to give him mine, for fear of wanting it myself? Should I not rather say, Let all I have be brought out as a sacrifice to my Lord; he is well able to repay me; and if he do not see it best to do so, then let us suffer together. I saw the case with the poor was the same, (as far as he had called me to help them,) and that my Lord had said, *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto them, ye have done it unto me!* Here a light broke into my mind, which quite satisfied me, and dispelled every cloud. I cried out, "Lord, thy will is enough! Thou hast bid me *love my neighbour as myself*; be it so. Their wants be mine; my substance theirs." Rising from my knees, I took up the Bible, when opening on Job, chap. xxii, verse 23, I found from that verse to the end of the chapter, several parts come as a message from Heaven. "If thou return to the Almighty thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. Then shalt thou lay up gold as the dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brook. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver. Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; and the light shall shine on thy path." These words were wrote as with a diamond pen upon my heart; and in all my trials I could never give up the confidence I then received, that I should one day see them accomplished.

Sister Ryan one day said to me, "We shall have such a sum to pay on Saturday night. Had we not better borrow it of such a friend, till your half year comes in?" We attempted so to do, but were disappointed. Being on my knees at prayer, I opened a book before me on the table, and cast my eyes on these words, "Christ charges himself with all your temporal affairs, while you charge yourself with those which relate to his glory. I closed my eyes, and continued praying; when to the eye of my mind, it seemed as if the Lord Jesus stood just by me, and spoke again those words to my heart, with such a

power as wiped away every care. Before I got off my knees, I was called down to speak to a man, who asked for me ; and who, through a providence too long to repeat, brought me just the sum I wanted.

The box began now to be helpful to us ; and this year, in the midst of our great expenses, an uncle gave me two hundred and fifty guineas. Once, on opening the box, we found a guinea wrapt up in a letter ; its contents were as follows :—

“MY DEAR CHILD,—With much pleasure I have heard of your charitable undertaking, which I pray God to bless and to succeed. Be never discouraged, though Divine providence should exercise you at times, even with many great and alarming difficulties ; for this is frequently the way in which God leads his children, in order to prove their faith and patience. But even supposing he should not succeed this affair, according to your present plan, yet he will never fail to bless those who sincerely endeavour to promote his honour, the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, and the good of souls. I desire you will accept the enclosed, and that you would set me down an annual contributor of the same sum. May the Lord Jesus Christ be with all of us ! Forget us not in your prayers.

“I am, with respect and regard,

“Your very affectionate friend,

“V. P.”

In another paper was a guinea enclosed, with these words : “I have felt your burden, and should be thankful had you more help. But perhaps it is the will of God concerning you, to give you *day by day your daily bread*. I pray him to be with you.”

Indeed we daily experienced many mercies. We had a household as a flock of sheep. Sometimes when we were sitting down to table, that word would come sweetly to our minds :—

“Part of his family are we,
His family of love.”

But above all other temporal goods, I saw the blessing of my friend Ryan. It would have been impossible for me to have acted this part alone ; I had neither grace nor ability for it ; but the Lord gave her to me as a mother.

In all the active part of this undertaking, she was the main spring. It is true, the light in forming the plans was given to me; but had it not been for her resolution and diligence, they would never have been brought into execution. Notwithstanding her ill health, it is amazing what she went through, both in overlooking and working with her own hands. She was truly devoted to God; and though I saw her at that time as a most precious gift of Heaven to me, I was not sufficiently sensible of her inestimable worth.

About this time a young lady, with whom I had been acquainted, came to board with us. After residing about half a year, she had a great desire to make a new will, in order to leave me a large sum of money; and asked me to recommend a lawyer to do it, as we then intended to visit Bath. I told her, I could not see it right that she should do so, as she was at a distance from her relations; had not sufficiently proved us; and might afterward change her mind. But my strongest objection was, she had told me that in her present will she had left the bulk of her estate (which was large) to charitable uses; and I had no desire to monopolize the riches of another, since my gracious Lord had given me a ready mind to part with all that was my own. She had two children under her care, whom she desired should be brought into our house; we accordingly received them. Several other expenses we entered into on her account; and she wrote a codicil to her will, leaving me two thousand pounds, adding, if she lived to return to her father the following spring, she should do much more. I freely consented to the codicil, as I then thought it but reasonable, my expenses on her account being considerable. But in October, 1766, she grew suddenly very ill, and her death seemed near. The codicil then lay much on our minds. I thought God's cause may be reproached through this; and what is two thousand pounds, or two hundred thousand, when compared to the honour of my God? Had it been done unknown to me, I should not have scrupled it. But as I had consented, I thought it would not be right to let it stand. Sister Ryan thought the same. We therefore prevailed on her to let us burn it. She was very unwilling, saying, "Had I lived to have made my

will, I should have given you much more, for I know God is with you."

She had been some years awakened, and joined to the Methodist society. After she had found the love of God, she walked in the way of self-denial and devotedness to God, according to her clearest light, for some time; and was in many things a striking pattern. She then sunk into a state of conflict, God revealing the inbred sin of her heart; and her spirit being oppressed by a constant bodily disorder, (supposed to be a polypus in the heart,) she often lost her shield, and was ready to think she had never had any work of God on her soul. About four months before her death, Satan assaulted her with many temptations. Sister Ryan advised her to take one hour every day for prayer, whether she should feel power attend her words or not; adding, My soul for yours, if you persevere, you shall shortly see the salvation of God. She received the word as from the Lord, and began the work in good earnest, but to her own feeling she grew darker and darker. Nevertheless we could discern a change. She grew more open, and told us of some snares which beset her, and which she had even thought of giving way to, adding, she saw herself worse and worse, till she was taken with her last illness, which continued but three days. Her soul seemed then very dark, and greatly did she lament the loss of that assurance she had formerly enjoyed. Yet she was not without hope; but still cried out, "O that I had but lived closer to God! I see I have not used my privileges as I ought. O what a work have I now to do! O it is hard work to do in sickness,—it is bad work to do in sickness!" Sister Ryan said, "My dear, I have no doubt but that God will finish his work." "O," replied she, "but I cannot believe it, I do not believe it for myself. O sister Ryan, I have had a thought in my heart,—If I had taken a certain step, to have laid the blame on you; for I thought, as you are so much under reproach among the half-hearted, I should be more readily believed, and now that stares me in the face." Some time after she said, "O my soul! my soul! I do not know where my soul is going!" Sister Ryan said, "My dear, I believe the Lord will come to your help this night: I feel such an impression of it, I think I must sit up and

wrestle for you all night." She looked at her, and was silent. A few minutes after she cried out, "O what a sweet word is come to me! I have not had such a word a long time. When you said you would stay and wrestle for me all night, I found a little comfort, but now it comes, *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* We were greatly affected, and sat by her in solemn silent prayer. She appeared to continue in a waiting posture for about half an hour, when she broke out in the following manner, (but with such a sweet and awful reverence as I cannot express,) "O now I know I shall be with Christ for ever! Yes, I shall, I shall come to thee, Lord. I shall be with thee for ever! O for ever! for ever! for ever! Yes! I shall be with thee for ever!" After recovering her breath a little, she addressed herself to the young women who were in the room, exhorting them to know and use their privileges. "You are," said she, "in a good situation, you will never be in a better. O my dears, be open, be open! Cover no temptation, and be all in earnest. I was a fool, and a double fool, that I did not live closer to God, and use more self-denial. I see great degrees of glory I have lost." After a little rest, she said, "O! how good is God! If I had strength I would write it all. How vile I have been, and what a salvation I now feel!" Then turning to me, she added, "But sister Bosanquet, do it; and I charge you cover nothing; in particular my unkind thoughts of sister Ryan. I charge you, I charge you!—Well," she added, "I shall see you all in heaven. I trust I shall see, I *know* I shall see you there. O take courage, my dear, take courage; do not be cast down at the difficulties of your situation. Fear nobody; God will stand by you. O he will take care of this family." About ten o'clock at night she said, "I shall be happy! I know I shall be as happy as I am capable of being! But I see great degrees of glory I have stopped short of. O that I had laid up more treasure in heaven!" She then cried out, "O my money! my cursed money! what an account shall I have to give of that! But Jesus has washed away all." This seemed the more strange, as she had from the first been a most liberal giver. But she explained herself to mean, with respect to the choice of objects which she had laid

it out upon. She lamented much she had not altered her will, saying, "I wish you had ten or twelve thousand pounds. I know it would glorify God, and if I were able, I would do it now. But God will take care of you." We left her a few hours in the night, when she said to the sisters who sat up with her, "Give me pen and paper, I cannot die easy, unless I write something of my mind concerning sister Bosanquet having the two thousand pounds. She did so, which was a striking instance of her love. This paper I saw it right not to destroy, and informed her relations of it; but it was not regarded, and we were well contented. About twelve the next day she seemed to change for death, and appeared just gone. I said, "Is Jesus precious?" She did not answer. One present observed, "Perhaps she is not sensible." After a few minutes she came to herself, and smiling, said, "Yes, I was sensible; but just as you spoke, I had a great struggle with Satan; at last these words were spoken, as if through my heart:—

‘Nature’s last agony is o’er,
And cruel sin subsists no more.’

But yet I do not know that the work is done. But I know it will be done. I am sure God will finish his work. Yes, I think I can believe. Yes, I will hold the Lord to his promise." She continued much the same for six hours, now and then saying, "I know he will finish his work. But I do not know it is done. Yet is there any sin? I do not know there is. Sometimes I feel," said she, with a smile, "as if I did not like to leave you all; is that sin? I do not know that it is." She added, "When I am dying, if I cannot speak, ask me any question, and if I mean yes, I will hold up my hand, for I would wish to praise God to the last." In the evening she seemed just departing. One present said, "Is your soul in peace?" She did not make the sign. I said, "Are you sensible, love?" She held up her hand. Some time after, we said, "Is all clear now?" She lifted up both her hands above her head. Sister Crosby said, "*The blood of Jesus hath cleansed you from all sin.*" She lifted them up again, and smiled with such an expression of joy as I cannot describe. She appeared as in a rapture, and strove much to speak, but we could only understand

that word, "He is my only portion." Then throwing herself back, she lifted up her eyes, and spreading her hands with great delight, made many signs upward. I said, "Is glory open before you?" She lifted up her hands pointing with one finger, and strove to speak, but we could only make out the word "Glory;" but the joy of her countenance was beyond all words, and in this posture she in one moment breathed her last.

Such a sense of God and glory rested on us, as I cannot describe. For several days it seemed to me as if I was continually sensible of the presence of the heavenly spirits; and so slender did the veil appear which divides the Church militant from that which is triumphant, that I saw myself surrounded with the innumerable company, and as if I heard them hail the happy saint on her arrival, in these words, which followed me continually:—

Ah! what were all thy sufferings here,
 Since Jesus counts thee meet
 With that enraptured host 't appear,
 And worship at his feet?*

Some time after this one of our young women had a desire to take a journey, which we thought would be dangerous to her, and warned her much to beware of the love of the world. Several nights she had had remarkable dreams, warning her to beware *that no man took her*

* This glorious scene will be accompanied with some pain to pious readers, and in some it will excite much curiosity. It will be asked, What were those "snares" that induced so strong a temptation, in such a devoted mind, thus to deviate from truth and love, according to the above agonizing confession. I cannot gratify such inquirers. Mrs. Fletcher thought it her duty to record the fact, and I have thought it my duty to let it appear: but I know no more. One thing is plain: Miss Lewen did not fall into the temptation; but it is also plain, she did not *resist it, steadfast in the faith*. Hence her deep sense of her evil nature, in having listened to it for a moment. When heavenly purity shone upon her soul, and that she found that purity was just about to be bestowed upon her for ever, how dreadful appeared the mental deviation! If we may hazard a conjecture, was it not some attachment of a worldly nature, on account of which she was tempted, and felt an answerable inclination to depart from a community so strictly evangelical? That thought was, perhaps, presented to her, viz., That that very strictness would excuse her to "the half-hearted;" and that to Mrs. Ryan would be chiefly imputed the rigidity which had forced her from this retreat. This was proba-

crown. We told her all our fears; and in particular to watch against the love of money. She said, "My light is so clear, that if I now do any thing unbecoming my profession, I shall be guilty, and doubly guilty." Sister Ryan said, "I feel I cannot give you up, but I am led to entreat the Lord, if you should be about to depart from him, that he would cut short the thread of your life, and take you to himself, and I believe he has heard me." She had not been from us many days, before the golden baits of pleasure and profit began to gain lustre in her eyes, and the little spark of light and life to decline out of her soul. The Lord stepped in, laid her on the bed of death, and gave her to acknowledge she had left the fountain head of bliss, and stooped to creature happiness. She was very desirous to see us, if it could have been; but a dear child of God attended her constantly, and wrestled much with God in her behalf. A little before her death she declared, "The Lord hath forgiven me. I shall be saved, but I shall suffer loss." Repeating the name of

bly the root of that agonizing conviction; especially when she saw that the person whom she had thought of, as thus to have borne her sin, was ready to risk her own tender life to help her through her last conflict! Miss Lewen, however, overcame at last; and verified Mr. Wesley's account of her.—See his Journal: (Works, vol. iv:) "Friday, the 31st October, at my return to London, I found it needful to hasten to Laytonstone. But I came too late. Miss Lewen died the day before, after an illness of five days. Some hours before she witnessed that good confession,—

'Nature's last agony is o'er,
And cruel sin subsists no more.'

So died Margaret Lewen, a pattern to all young women of fortune in England; a real Bible Christian. So she *rested from her labours, and her works do follow her.*"

Mrs. Ryan was, as Mrs. Fletcher has said, "a sickly, persecuted saint." She was poor, (though not destitute,) and hence was more liable to be the butt of the half-hearted. Miss Bosanquet, her twin soul, was a lady of birth and fortune, and on that account, rather too large for their grasp. Mrs. Ryan proved the whole of the eight beatitudes, as appears from Mr. Wesley's account of her in the Arminian Magazine, and from his admirable letters to her. (See his Works, vol. vi.) In one of them he says, "It is expedient for you to go through both evil and good report. The conversing with you either by speaking or writing, is an unspeakable blessing to me. I cannot think of you without thinking of God. Others often lead me to him, but it is, as it were, going around about. You bring me straight into his presence."—ED.

Jesus, her spirit returned to God, just four weeks from that day on which she left our house.*

“O! what is death? 'tis life's last shore,
Where vanities are vain no more.”

In the beginning of the year 1767, the Lord was pleased to exercise us with some little trials of another kind. Various reproaches were cast upon us. It was confidently affirmed, I had forced the before-mentioned young lady (Miss Lewen) to make a will when she was dying, and leave me all her estate, and that I had thus wronged her relations. Some religious professors said that I had wronged the poor; and that I had killed my friend by rigorous mortification: that I had driven her into despair, and caused her to die in darkness: with a variety of stories as ridiculous as false. The truth is, I had not gained one penny by her, but was many pounds out of pocket. However, these accounts were so industriously spread, and even to distant parts, that a gentleman from a place about a hundred miles off, told me some years after, he verily believed, had I walked through that town at one time, the mob would have stoned me! But *the Lord is a God of judgment, and by him actions are weighed.*

A little time before this the Lord was pleased to remove my dear parents. My father had a long and painful illness of three years; and my mother lived but nine months after. I was now permitted to be a good deal with them. One day my dear honoured father spoke to me with great tenderness concerning some of my former trials, and expressed much sorrow that my fortune was not left as much in my power as that of the other children,—saying, “If you desire it, I will alter my will now. But your uncle knows my mind; and if you marry a man to make you happy, it is all I wish. I do not care whether he has money or not. But whether you marry or not, you ought to have your fortune as well as the rest. If you desire it I will have it so altered;” with many more expressions

* Was not this extraordinary dispensation an instance of what St. John calls a *sin unto death*,—a sin which God punishes by the death of the body? It was not a little thing in his sight, to leave such a house, without a special call of his providence. Those, however, who form and govern such a house, should beware of any approach to the confinement of the *cloister*. There was nothing of that kind here.—Ed.

of paternal affection, which, though I do not think it proper to insert them here, will ever have a place in my heart. I begged him to make himself quite easy, and not to attempt the alteration of any thing; as I saw it must greatly disturb his peace, for several reasons. I assured him I saw myself safe in the hands of my heavenly Father, and knew I should never want any thing that was for my good; and that if I was favoured with seeing the salvation of his soul, I had no more to ask: God would take care of me. I was led thus to speak. From what he had said to me, however, I expected to have found in his will far less than he had really given me.

Immediately after the death of my father, my dear mother entered into her last illness. I found much love to her, and of consequence much pain. She expressed a tender kindness toward me during her illness, and showed her tender care, by augmenting the sum my father had left me.

During the illness of my dear parents, I suffered much, not only for them, but for my weak friend at home, and the weight of so great a family. Her increasing illness was an unspeakable exercise to me. She had some time before been brought near to death, but many promises of recovery were then brought to her mind with power; and after being so reduced as to be given over, she recovered as it were suddenly, and beyond all expectation, and remained in pretty good health for a year. But now she grew daily worse; and for three years her sufferings were great and frequent. I plainly saw she decayed fast, and all my nature shrunk at the thought of being left alone at the head of such an undertaking; and what added to my trial, we had increased our family with some whose spirit did not suit our house, so that jars and a divided interest sometimes arose, which till very lately we had not known. But the heaviest of all my yokes, was the galling yoke of unbelief. I remembered the time when I could say, "Unbelief has not a place in my soul to set its foot upon." But now I had slipped back from that constant act of faith. I had admitted cares and fears,* and by insensible degrees I was sunk again into

* Was this painful state *heaviness through manifold temptations*, (1 Peter i, 6,) or a real departure from the Lord? I believe some

my own will, and the strivings of evil tempers. Indeed, there was a confidence, a degree of union with God, which I never totally lost, neither did his fear depart out of my heart; yet I had inwardly departed from that pure love which I possessed. I had left off to delight myself in God, as heretofore, and accepted of many other things in his place; so that my trials were greater than I can well describe.

One day, as I was attending my sick friend, almost inconsolable, she said, "My dear, I hardly know how to rejoice in the prospect of death, because I see no way for you. I shall leave you in the hands of enemies, but God will stand by you." I said, "My dear love, can you think of any way for me? It is sometimes presented to my mind, that I should be called to marry Mr. Fletcher."* She replied, "I like him the best of any man, if ever you do take that step. But unless he should be of a very tender disposition toward you, you would not be happy: but God will direct you." It pleased God, however, in a measure to remove her disorder again; so that for some months she was enabled to act as a leader and a helper among us.

We are now pretty well settled; our meetings were quiet and comfortable; the number of hearers increased, and some of our little flock were gone triumphantly to

things that follow will incline the serious reader to conclude it was the former.—ED.

* The pious reader will not be displeased to see that such an impression was made on such a mind, preceding the union of that admirable couple. The impression was mutual. In a letter from Mr. Fletcher to Mr. Charles Wesley, (see Mr. Fletcher's Works, vol. iv,) we find the following sentiments: "You ask me a very singular question,—I shall answer it with a smile, as I supposed you asked it. You might have remarked that for some days before I set off for Madeley, I considered matrimony with a different eye to what I had done; and the person who then presented herself to my imagination was Miss Bosanquet. Her image pursued me for some hours the last day, and that so warmly, that I should, perhaps, have lost my peace, if a suspicion of the truth of Juvenal's proverb, *Veniunt a dote sagittæ*, (*The arrows come from the portion, rather than from the lady*,) had not made me blush, fight, and flee to Jesus, who delivered me at the same moment from her image and the idea of marriage." There will be some regret, perhaps, felt, that a long and suffering time should intervene before that union. But it was all ordered for the good of both,—for an eternal union,—for the marriage of the Lamb!—ED.

glory. My income being now larger, I thought a more easy path lay before me ; and I found much attachment to the place. Yet we were sickly, and the house was too small for such a family as ours. We had no land to it, (mine being all let off before to the other house,) and not having cows, such a number of children occasioned much inconvenience. Frequently I was advised to remove into some part of Yorkshire, and take a farm ; that otherwise it was impossible to bring up the children to every branch of needful business ; and that my income would go as far again in such a situation. I must here observe, though my income was increased, it was still not equal to our expenses, which were great on many accounts : I had also undertaken, in union with the young lady before mentioned, some charitable affairs, which now all fell on me, and many of them I could not throw off for some years. The box did not yield us as much by half as in the first year ; for like the manna in the wilderness, which ceased when the Israelites got corn, so that provision, which had been exceedingly useful to us, seemed now to be suspended. Yet I felt very averse to the thought of business ; I feared the *armour I had not proved*, and thought I should perhaps lose the little maintenance I had, rather than gain more.

One day, my friend being a little better, and all things at that time pretty comfortable, my own heart being also drawn with an unusual sweetness toward the Lord, I was walking in the garden,—when looking around me, it appeared as a paradise. I thought how sweet is my situation ! I dwell among my own people, a few who love me, and whom I love. The family is getting more and more as I could wish ; and as to our circumstances, I can freely trust my God farther than I can see, so that all my care on him is cast, and here I hope to end my days. Immediately a thought presented itself,*—But suppose God should call you from this place ; and there should be yet some bitter cups for you to drink ? I started at the thought ; but said, Give me power to say, *Thy will be done*.

About this time Richard Taylor came from Yorkshire,

* It is by no means clear that this was from the Lord.—Ed.

being driven from thence by misfortunes. He left a wife and young family, and came to London in hopes of settling with his creditors. Sister Crosby (who was now a member of my family) had known him in Yorkshire, and Mr. Dornford and Mr. Murlin recommended him to me, and proposed his staying for a time at our house. He seemed (and I believe he then was) a devoted man. We were much interested in his behalf. When we sat down to dinner, the thought that his wife and children were in trouble and distress, would often so overwhelm him, he could not take a morsel. He appeared a man of prayer, and one of the excellent of the earth.

Various circumstances occurred which seemed plainly to call us to seek another habitation, and Yorkshire was the place most likely. Yet such a call did not seem desirable to me. My reason seemed to point that way; my inclination was to remain where I then was. One morning, however, as I was reading in my turn to the family, I came to these words, "Come out from thy kindred and thy country, and come into a land which I will show thee." I felt myself penetrated with resignation, I felt my strong attachment to the place, as being the place of my birth, quite removed, and I seemed free to follow the leading of the Spirit of God to any corner of the earth.*

My friend and I began seriously to consider whether our work was not done at Laytonstone: whether, after spending about five years at this place, we were not now called to another spot. A physician had told us, if there were any hopes of sister Ryan's recovery, it would be by a journey. She had unexpectedly recovered at Bath before, and it might be so again. At this time she was very bad. I objected, however, to the moving her in so weak a condition; to which she answered, "If the Lord see fit to spare me, probably that is to be the means of raising me up; and if he has otherwise determined, I should be glad to see you settled first; for if you are left without me here, I think you will have great difficulty, from several circumstances; and probably such an exchange

* Whether this leading was really of the Spirit of God or not, her submission to *him* made her *more than conqueror*.—ED.

of place and situation would put it in your power to alter and remove those difficulties."

My relations and Christian friends seemed all to approve, and we believed our way was plain for taking a journey to Leeds, and some adjacent places, in order to judge better whether they were suitable, and whether we could meet with a habitation that would answer our great family.

Accordingly, on June the seventh, 1768, I set out with my friend Ryan, and sister Crosby. Brother Taylor, who was now to return home, accompanied us on horseback.* It may be supposed we had a troublesome journey and aching hearts, for my dear sister Ryan was so

* All those who have read, with pious interest, the beginning and progress of the house of God at Laytonstone, must regret its dissolution. Had it been favoured with any successors of the same spirit, we might rejoice that those who had, as *the salt of the earth*, been the *savour of life* to that people, were about to season other places. But that was not the case. There were no such successors; and it is by no means clear, that there was such a call of Divine Providence as was sufficient to justify these chosen instruments in departing from a place so divinely visited, and in dissolving an establishment so owned of the Lord. Mr. Wesley's sentiments concerning that establishment, are very decisive. In his Journal (see his Works, vol. iv) he says, "Thursday, December 12, 1765, I rode over to Laytonstone, and found one truly Christian family. This is what that at Kingswood should be, and would, if it had such governors." Again, "Thursday, February 12, 1767, I preached at Laytonstone. O what a house of God is here! Not only for decency and order, but for the life and power of religion. I am afraid there are very few such to be found in all the king's dominions." Ought not the call to be clear, and even imperative, that led to the dissolution of such a house? We have indeed heard the blessed woman who was at the head of it, observing with grief, "We had increased our establishment with some whose spirit did not suit our house, so that jars and a divided interest arose." And could she think the devil had fallen asleep, or that he would not take the old way,—that he would not *sow tares among the wheat*? Such persons should have been dismissed, after all long-suffering had been manifested. We should add to our loving faith, courage, knowing for whom we are to act. As this way, it seems, was not taken, we cannot wonder that the heaven should win its way, and a cloud overspread the once illuminated mansion. In such a dark day, it is no wonder that "cares and fears" should assault her devoted heart, so that she hardly knew her own state, and had almost given up her confidence. A new way seemed to open, of which Mr. Taylor was the harbinger,—a way so entangled with briers and thorns, that there seemed, at length, hardly any hope of deliverance. But *the*

ill us to be carried in arms in and out of the chaise, and to be watched with every night; and the bringing down so large a family two hundred miles, was attended with no little difficulty. We went first to Mr. Taylor's wife's parents, where we found a family of serious persons. The old man and woman were patterns of industry and seriousness; and the wife a person with whom I found much fellowship of spirit. We stayed with them seven weeks, until we could find a house which for the present would suit our purpose,—which we at length did at Gildersom, in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

My dear companion now began to sink daily; but as the account of her last scene is included in her life, I will not enter into any particulars of it here, only add that on the seventeenth of August, 1768, she experienced, in reality, what she had seen in her dream, viz., that

“He would kiss her raptured soul away.”

She departed this life in the forty-fourth year of her age. Thus passed the dreaded moment which I had for seven years so painfully apprehended. But she had often in her illness said to me, “My dear friend, I have obtained for you of the Lord that you shall not be overcome of sorrow; therefore fear not, for I know he heard me.” Her prayer was, in a great degree, answered; I was not overcome of sorrow. The thought of her long suffering, and present happiness, much alleviated the bitter cup which I had tasted of occasionally for some years. My great affliction did not come at once. The Lord treated me as we do a child; he put one thing into my hand to take away another. I thought I saw some comfortable prospects before me in life, and a veil was drawn over the many and great crosses which were to follow. I prayed I might be kept close to the will of God, and preserved

Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation: and until then,

“Darkly safe with God, thy soul
His arm still onward bears,
Till through each tempest, on the whole,
A peace Divine appears!”

This was the blessed result. *The Lord turned her captivity, and filled her mouth with laughter, and her tongue with praise.—Ed.*

from turning to the right hand or to the left, now that I had lost my spiritual mother. But I did not wish to die, neither could I get my heart into that spiritual frame I had enjoyed in the year 1762, and therefore being mingled with earth, I felt all my ties were not cut through. I had sometimes conversed with her on the subject of departed spirits having communion with us, and she used to say, "If it be the will of my heavenly Father, I should rejoice to communicate some comfort to you, either in a dream or any other way." But I never had even the slightest remembrance of her in any dream for some months, though she possessed so great a share in my waking thoughts. I often wondered at this, till one night, I think six months after her death, I thought she was hovering over me, as in a cloud, and from thence spoke in her own voice some lines in verse; but I could only retain the latter part, which were these words:—

"Mingle with earth we can no more
But when you worship God alone,
We then shall mutually adore."

By which I understood she meant, I was not in that purity which was requisite for communion with heavenly spirits; but it raised in my heart an expectation that such a season would come.

My invaluable friend was buried in Leeds old church-yard; where to her name and age were added only these words,—

"Who lived and died a Christian."

PART THE THIRD.

HER SETTLEMENT IN YORKSHIRE.

My health began to fail. I had for three years had much fatigue in nursing my dear friend; and some crosses which now flowed in apace greatly affected me. I grew large, and had dropsical symptoms. My soul was

at this season in a low and cold state. My path was strewn with many perplexities; and I was at a loss how or where to settle. Trade I much feared; and yet I did not see how I could do without it. My family consisted of thirty persons, of whom some were rather unruly. I saw the need of taking the reins into my own hands, and supplying the place of my friend Ryan. But this determination was very difficult to execute; and I daily and hourly felt my insufficiency. While she was alive, I considered her as a mother, and, like the other young women, desired her to allot me my rules and employments; or at least to assist me in the choice of them. These were,—First, An attention to the spiritual affairs of the family. Secondly, Taking care for their sustenance, Thirdly, Instructing the children. Fourthly, Meeting each member of the family, one by one, at fixed times. Fifthly, Superintending, by turns, the more public meetings of the society. Sixthly, Attending my friend in her frequent illnesses; with the direction and management of the sick. But the care of the kitchen, buying in the stores, managing the needlework, with many other articles of direct housekeeping, I was quite unaccustomed to. While I lived in my father's house I saw very little of domestic affairs, because we lived rather high; so that I was quite a stranger to that kind of management needful for a great family, who had but little to live on. Besides, the manner of life here was entirely different from what I had been used to about London. Here wheat was to be bought to make flour; bread to be made; cows to be managed; men servants to be directed; with a variety of particulars in housekeeping quite new to me. Had my friend been spared, all this would have been a pleasure; but now my spirits were so depressed, every thing appeared a burden;—and when I had provided as well as I could, some persons in my family would despisngly say my victuals were not worth eating; and that I knew not how to order any thing. I had frequent letters from distant parts, some pitying, some upbraiding me; and informing me, at the same time, “The stories which we hear carried about concerning you, come all from the members of your family.” O! said I, I have not abode in my Saviour as I ought; *I have gone down to Egypt for*

help, and therefore is all this come upon me: otherwise, I should still inherit that word, applied to me with power in the first gathering of my household, "Thou art my hope and my fortress, my castle and deliverer, my defender in whom I have trusted; who subdueth the people that are under me." I mentioned before, that we had met with a large house, in part furnished, which was of great service, as my own furniture was not yet arrived. There was land to it, and though dear, I saw it a providence, and an asylum till we could fix better. In the ordering of the outdoor affairs, Mr. Taylor was very useful to me, and indeed had not he and his wife been with me, I do not think I should ever have got through some difficulties which I had to encounter. One day he brought me word of a farm very cheap, with a freehold estate adjoining thereto, on which were malt kilns, a small house, and many out-buildings. The farm was large; and he thought, if beside the farm house, we were to build one big enough for our family, it would be cheaper than to rent a house. I was very averse to the undertaking; but there was no time to lose, as many were seeking after it. I went to Leeds, to consult the most judicious of my friends, in particular Mr. R., a man well acquainted with business, and the most intimate friend I had in Yorkshire. He answered, "You may look on this, as Isaac did when he found a well, for which they did not strive." He said, "*The Lord hath made room for us in the land.*" "So," added he, "may you say; for had you waited a dozen years, you might not have met with such an opportunity." I objected "that I did not understand it, and that perhaps it would sink, instead of increasing my income." He replied, "Richard Taylor knows well how to manage it, if you do not; and I have no doubt that it will clear you a hundred and fifty pounds a year, which will be good interest for your money." I now remembered the reflection cast on me at Laytonstone, viz., "If she wants to do good with her fortune, let her take up a little trade. She talks of the poverty of Jesus; let us see her work at a trade as he did." That thought had much weight with me. I prayed for light, and took the place; bought the estate, formed the plan for the house, and set about it. The first mark of the favour of God was, we had some

of our work people converted, so that before half the house was built we had a good class. The desire after purity of heart was much revived among the neighbouring societies; and I found in many ways there was a wider field opened for doing good than I had ever before experienced. I had some among the members of my family also, who were very helpful in the work of God. By settling on a new plan, I found it more easy to draw things into my own hand. I removed some, and put others into their proper place.

The building I found no cheaper than in the south, or but little so: it cost a good deal more than at first proposed. The farm took a great deal to stock, and bring into order; and as most of my capital lay in an estate, (or in that sum my dear father on his deathbed so lamented that he had tied up from me,) I had not sufficient for all the expenses, with the purchase of the freehold; and was obliged to take up money on interest, which I hoped to pay off at fifty pounds per year. The malt kilns seemed to answer well, and cleared the first year fifty pounds above all expenses.

Our call was a good deal abroad in the work of God, and we had encouragement therein. A few (and at that time but a few) in that part had a desire after holiness. Some years before this, sister Crosby had spent a little time in Yorkshire. She told them what a wonderful work of sanctification God was carrying on in London. Many were affected with her words, and two or three in this place retained the light and power then given to them. These we agreed to meet once a fortnight; and unite our cry to the Lord, that he would pour out a spirit of conviction on his people, and that the neighbouring societies might be stirred up to seek for purity of heart. We had not met many times before the answer came; one and another begged to join in our Wednesday night meetings, and our number increased to about fifty, all of whom were ardently desiring, or sweetly brought into that liberty. When we grew too numerous, (for they began to come from many miles around,) I advised those who were able, to gather a meeting of the same kind, near their own homes. This was attended with many blessings. We sometimes visited those infant meetings, and they in-

creased and spread as well as ours. It must be observed, none were admitted as members into our meeting, but those who were truly awakened to seek for holiness, as before they had been to seek for pardon. Others, if we judged them sincere, were sometimes occasionally admitted: but we were very careful whom we considered as fixed members. Of these I had a separate list; and about once a quarter met them apart from the others. I felt myself led to enforce on them some particular observations, which they frequently asked me to set down on paper. I did, therefore, set them down as follows:—

As you have expressed a desire that I would give you on paper the few observations I have sometimes made on Wednesday nights, I will endeavour so to do, as far as I can recollect. And if my dear Lord is pleased to help you through so weak an instrument, he shall have the more abundant praise.

First, I would recommend you to be very careful whom you admit into your meeting. Consider no one as member thereof who is not steadily seeking after Christian perfection; that is, a heart simplified by love Divine, and kept each moment, by faith, from the pollution of sin. Whosoever agrees not with you on this point, will greatly interrupt your design.

Secondly, See that you fix on your minds,—We come together to get our faith increased; and expect as much that our souls should be refreshed by our meeting, as we do our bodies to be refreshed by our food. Come with a lively expectation; and that your expectation may not be cut off, keep your spirit all the time in continual prayer; united prayer can never go unanswered. Mr. Fletcher, on this head, has a lively observation: “When many believing hearts,” says he, “are lifted up, and wrestle in prayer together, we may compare them to many hands which work a large pump; at such times particularly the fountains of the great deep are broken up, the windows of heaven are opened, and rivers of living water flow from the hearts of obedient believers.”

Thirdly, Bear with each other's mistakes or infirmities in love. Consider the members as if they were your own children. How much will a man bear with in *his own son that serveth him*? *A threefold cord cannot be easily*

broken. Satan will leave no stone unturned to disunite you;—but O, remember the characteristic of the evangelical dispensation is,—

“The love that turns the other cheek;
The love inviolably meek,
Which bears, but conquers all.”

Fourthly, Be well aware of that deadly poison, so frequent among professors,—I mean evil speaking. It will cover itself under a thousand forms; and, alas! how many sincere hearts swallow this gilded bait before they know what they are about. Never repeat the fault of an absent person, unless it be absolutely needful. In particular, speak not evil of dignities; neither of our king, on whose account we have the greatest reason to be thankful; nor yet of any in authority under him. Neither those whom God hath set over us as spiritual teachers. If any of these do not speak just as we could have wished, never forget that *one may have his gift after this manner, another after that.* The exhortation not so immediately useful to your state may nevertheless be put into their mouth at that time for another person then present. *Known unto God are all his ways*; and as he hath said, *A cup of cold water given to a prophet*, shall not be forgotten, how pleasing will it be in his sight, if by faith and prayer we hold up the hands of his praying servants.

Fifthly, Hold fast the truth in a pure conscience. Let not one spark of your light be put out. Though all your teachers, brethren, friends, yea, the whole Church, were to turn against the truth, let nothing make you forget, *The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin*; and that he keeps that soul for ever clean, who day and night hangs on him by simple faith.

Sixthly, Be always ready to give an account to those that ask you a reason of the hope that is in you. In order to this, let us pray for clear ideas of what we seek, and what we possess. Bear in mind, that to *perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord*, is no more than you have already promised: First, By your sponsors in baptism; secondly, In your own person, when you made those vows your own by confirmation; and, thirdly, Whenever you renew that covenant by coming to the Lord's table. “You have engaged to renounce the devil and all his

works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh ; to believe all the articles of the Christian faith ; to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of your life." And is not this vowing to *perfect holiness in the fear of God* ? Does the first part of this sacred engagement, To renounce the devil and all his works, leave any room for the least agreement with the devil, the world, or the flesh ? Does the second, To believe all the articles of the Christian faith, make the least allowance for one doubt with respect to any one article of the Christian faith ? Or, does the third allow the wilful breach of any one of God's commandments ? Again, Do we not all profess to believe it to be our duty *to love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves* ? Weigh the depth of those two expressions. Do they not imply *love made perfect*, or, in other words, Christian perfection ?

Seventhly, Remember that saying of Solomon, *The wise man's eyes are in his head*. Let your eye of faith be steadily fixed on your living Head, deeply conscious of that word,—

" Having done all, by faith I stand,
And give the praise, O Lord, to thee !"

A holy man makes this observation : " Persevering believers are little omnipotents." Abide then every moment in the living vine, from whom you constantly draw your life, as the coal its heat from the fire ; it was all black, cold, and filthy, before it was impregnated with the fire that kindled it ; but if by any accident it fall therefrom, the shining perfection which it had acquired, gradually wears away, and it becomes a filthy cinder, the black emblem of an apostate. So true is that saying of our Lord, *Without me ye can do nothing*.

Eighthly, Consider yourselves as united by a holy covenant to God and to each other ; aiming to advance the glory of God all you possibly can.

" Ye for Christ your Master stand
Lights in a benighted land."

Beware then that your light become not darkness ; let no one be discouraged from seeking Christian holiness, by any thing they see in your life and conversation. We must become a whole burned sacrifice. The soldier enlist-

ed under the banner of his king, may neither leave his post, nor choose his employment. We have covenanted to be the Lord's; and may not draw back one power, nor one thought, from his service. Be it then engraven on our hearts, as with a diamond pen, "Thy vows, O God, are upon me; I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and cannot go back."

Glory be to God, it might be said of Cross Hall, (the name of our present habitation,) many a soul has been born in her, and many sweet seasons did we know with the Lord; and I do at this day declare I shall ever adore the wisdom of God in bringing me down to settle in Yorkshire. It was good for the work of God. It was good for my own soul;* but for a season it did not appear good for my temporal affairs. I had not been seven years there, before I saw myself brought into great perplexity, from circumstances I shall by and by relate. But whatever occurred, I must ever praise the Lord, that his providence brought me there. I had a continual presentiment my troubles were for an appointed time; and that in the end deliverance would be given from every difficulty.

I found my mind much united to brother and sister Taylor. I strove to remove their burdens, and went in person to their creditors. After meeting with some opposition, I got their affairs settled, at the expense of between two and three hundred pounds.

After the death of sister Ryan, my soul had many risings and sinkings. Sometimes I seemed to lose my way, and knew not where or what I was. For about two years, I sunk into fear, care, self-indulgence, and many wanderings. Yet my aim was toward the Lord, who, after that season, began again to renew in me a tender conscience, and as my outward sorrows increased, so my inward light and power began to revive. It was soon after that time that we began the meeting above mentioned, as near as I can remember, though I have not set

* Nothing could prevent such a devoted person from bearing fruit unto God. In answer to the prayer of faith, *He opens rivers in the high places, and streams in the desert.* Mr. Wesley, speaking of her settlement in Yorkshire, observes, (see his Works, vol. iv.) "Saturday, July 7th, 1770, I rode to Miss Bosanquet's. Her family is still a pattern, and a general blessing to the country."—Ed.

down the exact date thereof; by my diary it appears to be about a year after my soul began again to walk by faith. These meetings were to me a singular blessing. They cost me many a wrestling prayer, and when the nights approached when we were to meet, O! the sinking into nothing before God my spirit used to feel! Of all the meetings I ever was employed in while in Yorkshire, I know not I ever felt my soul so conscious of the Lord's approval as in these. I must acknowledge it occasioned both expense and labour. Frequently I had many beds to make up, and many friends and their horses to entertain. But I saw it such an honour to be (as I sometimes expressed it) the Lord's innkeeper, that I could feel nothing but satisfaction therein. Those words were often applied with great sweetness, *The birds of the air shall rest under thy branches.*

I now found a fresh conviction of the necessity of Divine help, that I might go in and out before my family, in such a manner as would lead them into the most excellent way; and when any thing particular rested on my mind, I usually set it down in the way of diary. On looking over old papers, I find the following remarks; but am not quite clear as to the dates:—

"This day I have been solemnly renewing my covenant with the Lord, and considering over our family rules, fasts, and meetings. I have been praying for fresh vigour and resolution in the use thereof; and while reading this morning the vision of Samuel concerning Eli, I was led to inquire how far it was my own case. Lord, thou hast made me the head of this family. Do I *bear the sword in vain*? Show me, Lord, what I can do to help them, considered one by one, and how I may help to put away, in each, whatever would offend. The thoughts which flowed into my mind were as follows:—

"First, *Love is the end of the commandment.* If I would wish to be such a head as God approves, I must have no spring of action but love. Yet when we have many tempters to suit ourselves to, all their burdens to bear, and their every want to supply, (even in narrow circumstances,) nature is apt to grow weary. It is very easy to give our neighbour what we can spare, but to pinch ourselves, and even to run the risk of debts and distress for their

sakes, makes the work far more hard. How then shall I get and keep that spirit of love to each which is needful for my fulfilling toward them the place of a mother? or, in some sense, to be *a pillar in God's house*, who is appointed to bear the weight of the whole building?

"I will call over each member in my mind with solemn prayer, and search out every perfection of every kind;—every trace of the image of God which I can discern in each, and enter them on paper; adding thereto every fresh discovery—and then to each name affix a plan, denoting what is the best method of helping that person's infirmities, and strengthening their virtues. If I do not thus study the tempers and dispositions of my family, how unlike will my carriage be to that of my heavenly Father toward me. I am also much convinced of the necessity of being exact in early rising, both for the good of my own soul, and that of my family; and as I am now better, I trust to be able to execute my purpose. I shall also meet the family at stated times, for an hour, in order to inquire if brotherly love continues. And to remove all hindrances thereto, I will at those times observe,—

"My design in having a family is to bring honour to God. If that end be not answered, I am disappointed, and the Spirit of God is grieved with those who hinder it.

"But in order to this, it is needful to be aware of Satan's devices, who will be always endeavouring to throw in something to wound love; and among a large family, where there is a multiplicity of business, perplexities will arise, which sometimes have a tendency to break, or at least to interrupt, that sweet harmony of love, by which the Church below is rendered a shadow of that above.

"To prevent this must be my constant labour. I believe you all love me; and I am, my heavenly Father knows, united to every one of you. But that will not do, unless you are united among yourselves. I would therefore inquire of each, one by one:—

"First, Do you find want of love to any one here? If you answer yes, give your reason, and it shall be searched to the bottom, though it be in myself.

"Secondly, Is there any conduct of any member which you think might be mended?

"Thirdly, We are to live only to and for God. You all

can bear me witness, what we save is saved for the poor, and the work of God. Now, can any of you point out wherein we can save more? This is to be done in little things: for instance, suppose twenty of you had each a candle to use, and each person were to run it into the fire, and waste a tenth part of the whole, that would be two candles lost per night. If each fire (we will say ten) burn one pennyworth of coals per day more than is needful, there are five shillings and tenpence per week lost; enough to make two poor people, who love and serve the Lord, comfortable. The same may be said of every thing we eat, drink, wear, or make use of. Savingness gives a constant and profitable use of the cross; as well as administrators, by those small acts of self-denial, to the necessities of our brethren. If we are thirty in family, besides many strangers—suppose every one by frugality to save (every thing being put together) but two pence per day, what a large sum will that make in the whole year—nearly a hundred pounds!—and how many of the saints of God may be fed and clothed therewith!

“Fourthly, Time is a most invaluable talent; and there is scarcely an hour but we may save some minutes, by doing every thing as to the Lord, that is, in the best manner we are able. It is a true saying, a thing once well done is twice done. For instance, if you sew a seam carelessly, it will soon want doing over again. If you clean any thing by halves, it will want a repetition almost directly. If linen is badly got up, and not of a good colour, it will not wear half the time. Consequently, the next wash will be larger, will require more time, more soap, more fire, &c. If you teach the children by halves, they will need so many more lessons, and be so much the longer before they are useful at home, or fit to go out; so that the desire of saving time calls for the most diligent application in every thing. But in order truly to buy up this precious talent, there is a necessity of walking as in the constant presence of God. By that recollection, we shall cut off useless words and thoughts, which are the canker worms that eat up our time.

“Fifthly, The power of speech is a great talent. It is an instrument of much good, or much evil. The tongue is a little member, yet how much good or evil is it capable

of kindling ! A little spark may be the beginning of a flame powerful enough to destroy a whole city ; and one wrong word may draw on another, until the tongue, ‘ which is a world of iniquity, may set on fire all the members, being itself set on fire of hell.’ On the other hand, in a large family, how useful may that member be ! While it possesses the honour of being God’s advocate, and watches every moment for an opportunity to call in the minds of those around you to a closer attention to God. The right use of the tongue is of the utmost consequence, (especially in a religious community,) and worthy our strictest and most earnest endeavours ; since the apostle says, ‘ He that offendeth not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.’ ”

The next Friday, after this family meeting, I proposed as a fast—at twelve we were to meet for one hour, chiefly for earnest prayer. At these seasons I frequently found much of the presence and approval of God, and I believe they were blessed to many of the family.

To return to my outward situation. When I had been a few years in Cross Hall, I had many trials of faith and patience. Sometimes I was all fears ; and at others, I had a lively confidence in that word, *Stand to my will, and thou shalt suffer no detriment*, which was applied to me just before the period of sister Ryan’s death.

Various circumstances now agitated my mind ; and frequently with groans and tears have I said before the Lord, “ O that I could meet with a friend as divinely enlightened, and as faithful as the one I have lost ! It would be worth going over red hot bars of iron to procure.” But though I knew some of the excellent of the earth, yea, and had some of them under my own roof, yet friendship is so immediately the gift of God, we cannot form it when we will. There must be a similitude of mind, a something which God alone can give, and which he at this time was pleased to withhold from me, perhaps that I might learn to depend on himself alone. The point in which I was peculiarly sensible of the loss of my friend, was in the character of a counsellor. I wanted to know and do the will of God. I feared I was wrong in my present situation, because things did not answer ; and yet I did not know which way to mend them. But I have always found the

best way is to stand still; for I have learned by experience, that when we have no light how to get out of our troubles, and no way seems to open, the present duty is resignation. We have only to follow Providence from day to day, making it our one business to persevere in a constant sense of the presence of God, and to lie before his feet as poor beggars, waiting for his direction.

Some time before this a circumstance happened, which though to appearance trifling, proved in the end very material. A gentleman, who about two years before lost a wife he tenderly loved, on hearing of me, and the close union which had subsisted between me and Mrs. Ryan, permitted a thought to dwell on his mind—that perhaps I was brought to Yorkshire by the providence of God to repair his loss.

One day, as I was returning from a little journey where I had been to meet some people, we called at an inn to bait the horse. Mr. *** was standing at a window of that inn. I came out, and stood some time at the block waiting for my horse. A thought struck his mind, “I should like that woman for a wife; but instantly he corrected it with that reflection, I know not whether she be a converted or an unconverted person; a married or a single woman. Just then Mr. Taylor came up with the horse. The gentleman knew him, and coming out to speak to him, was much struck to find it was I. But as there was not any thing striking to me in the occurrence, I had quite forgotten it, till he recalled it to my remembrance some years after.

As I was very free in making known my fears, lest my new undertaking should not answer, some friends have often said to me, “Why do not you consult Mr. ***? He is the only man for business in the country; and having heard of your situation, he wishes to give Mr. Taylor some advice.” Not long after a friend brought him to our house. I did not know at that time whether he were married or single. We soon fell into conversation about the farm. He gave me some directions, and interested himself much in my affairs. I frequently applied to him in difficult occurrences, and he became, in the common acceptance of the word, a familiar friend.

My perplexities now increased, The farm had sunk a

very large sum to bring it into order, and the kilns took much money to work them, a great deal of which lay scattered up and down in debts owing to me from lesser maltsters. I applied not only to Mr. ***, but to some other sensible men. They looked over all, and said I was too much afraid: in a year or two things would turn round. That I had a farm to *make*; but it was now in such order, it would soon pay all again. This gave me some satisfaction, but did not on the whole remove my fears. I also saw Mr. Taylor went too far; that he was inclined to venture much; that he kept too many men; and gave a great deal too much credit.

This answered Mr. ***'s design. By these things he was inclined to think God was constraining me to accept the offer, which by this time he had made me, of his hand, his heart, and his purse. His affections were strong, sincere, and constant; his offers generous, and his sentiments tender. He loved my family; and whoever was kind to me, found favour in his eyes. This could not but operate on my gratitude. I was deeply pained. But I could not see him the man my highest reason chose to obey. First, I did not so honour the light he had in religion, as to believe it my privilege to be led thereby. Secondly, Though he was a good man, and helpful to people in every respect, yet he did not see the narrow path of walking close with God, as I could wish the man I took for a husband to do. Thirdly, Though I had a grateful love toward him, I could not find that satisfying affection which flows from perfect confidence; and which is the very spirit and soul of marriage.

I felt, however, in the keenest manner the need I had of his assistance in my affairs; but I thought it ungenerous to the last degree to accept of help and counsel from one whose growing affection I was too sensible of, but to which, however, I could make no return. I used the plainest terms in assuring him of the impossibility of our affection ever becoming reciprocal; and proposed the breaking off all acquaintance. He alleged in answer, "You cannot do without me. You will be ruined;—God hath made me your helper; and if you cannot see and feel as I do, we will be only common friends. I will say no more on a subject so disagreeable to you."

I lessened my family all I could, by putting out some of the bigger children to trades, or servants' places ; but much expense attended it. Mr. Taylor also had several children while with me, so that the family still consisted of twenty-five persons. The majority, however, were grown persons. But losses still continually came on ; and my first seven years in Yorkshire being nearly expired, I found an absolute need of some change, since in all this time things grew not better, but worse.

I consulted Mr. *** and other friends about my situation, but most were for some farther exertion in trade. That I knew would not do. Others said, "Turn off all those members of your family, and you have enough to live on alone, with a servant or two." No way, however, opened for them, and several were old, sickly, or helpless. I could not therefore see how that could be done ; and if ever I thought on it, mountains of difficulty arose before me. Something seemed to whisper, a way shall be made quite plain ; yet I saw it my duty to do every thing in my power. I therefore consulted Mr. ***, who knew my whole affairs as no other person did. He said, "There is but one way for you ; put the farm into Mr. Taylor's hand, entirely separate from yourself. Let him have the stock just as it is, and work the kilns as he can raise money. Let him pay you sixty pounds per year, and take his family to the end of the house. I verily believe he will live well, and lay up money ; and I will overlook all, and appraise every thing once a year." I did so. Mr. *** took great pains, and Richard Taylor paid regularly. But as he was to have it free of debt, I found a good deal to pay which he had not brought to account ; so that before all was settled, I had money again to take up on interest, which was no small affliction to me ; and could I have sold the place, I would have chosen it rather.

We went on tolerably for three years. Mr. *** thought the farm increased in heart. The stock also improved, and all was cheerful, except in my mind, which foreboded deeper waters. This was soon realized. In the beginning of the fourth year Taylor was in debt to the amount of six hundred pounds. This was what I all along feared ; but I thought, I am not obliged to pay his debt ; let him break, and bear his own burden. Mr. *** at first thought

the same; but soon we saw, either I must give up the stock, (which would be sold for half its value,) or pay the money. Besides, I was now informed that when he ceased to act as my agent, I ought to have advertised it, that no one might trust him through confidence in me. But this (being unused to business) I did not know.

I deeply felt for the appearance it would have to my relations. I had before, with their knowledge, taken up money on the Laytonstone estate, and my brothers were very kind, and ordered all my affairs in the south to the best advantage. I did not therefore see it just or prudent to hide any thing from them. I wrote to my eldest brother a full account of the whole; but could not see, at that time, how I could pay; nor was I quite clear it was required of me. Taylor's wife, now big with child, wringing her hands, entreated me, in mercy to her, not to let her husband go to prison; and indeed she was clear of blame, for all along she had been afflicted with the fear of what was now come upon them. I knew not what to do: above all, the honour of religion was dear to me; and it was too evident, without an appearance of dishonesty, I could not take back the stock, though really my own, and leave the debts unpaid. Besides, many of the persons were poor, and would be greatly hurt by the loss. We had also at this time a lively work; for whatsoever else did not prosper by going into Yorkshire, the work of God did. Being at length determined on the payment, the next difficulty was, where to raise the money. I had now taken back all my affairs out of Taylor's hands, but was incapable of managing the business myself, nor could I get the place disposed of. Mr. *** then offered to lend me the six hundred pounds on interest, and to become a partner with me in the farm and kilns, so as to take the management of all. Here I was quite at a loss. I was almost ready to say, "Darkness hath covered my path." Prudence, delicacy, every lively sentiment, started back at the thought. What! come under such an obligation to the man I am constantly refusing! Besides, such a fresh connection will open the door to many trials. But there was no alternative; I must accept his help or be ruined. I therefore followed what appeared to be the leadings of Providence. A little before this, I had a draw-

ing in my mind to go for six months to Bath, Bristol, and the parts adjacent, believing it to be the order of God ; and I was not sorry for an excuse to get two hundred miles from poor Mr. ***.

One night, conversing with a friend on the difficulties of my situation, he said, " I cannot approve of your proceedings ; I fear you fight against Providence. Here are several doors open before you. If you object to Mr. ***, why do not you accept of some other of those good men, whom the Lord seems to have cast in your way ? You stand stiffly in the choice of a single life, and it seems to me, God fights against you in so doing. The end will be ruin. You will be brought to a prison, and all the reproach will be cast on religion. If you build on the former promise I have heard you mention, *That the Almighty shall be your defence, and you shall have plenty of silver*, I account you no better than an enthusiast. Have you not waited long enough ? You hoped for deliverance at the end of the first seven years ; but four are elapsed since, and if you wait till the end of the next seven, you will be no nearer." Though his words did not convince my judgment, they pained my heart. Nothing was to me more dreadful than the thought of getting out of God's order. I carried my case to the Lord, and striving to divest my soul of every prejudice, I offered up myself to God, that he might accomplish all his will upon me,—pleading before him, " Show me thy way, and I will walk in it." But the more I prayed, the clearer the light seemed to shine on my present path ; and the only answer I could obtain was, *Stand still and see my salvation*.

Being one day at prayer about my situation, I thought, perhaps I shall sink lower still. Though Mr. *** believes he shall make much of the business, he may be mistaken ; and should I lose more than my estate at Laytonstone and this place also will pay, then I shall have debts I can, not answer ; and while there is but a bare possibility of that, shall I eat and drink as if it was my own ? Ah ! no ; let me rather live on bread and water. I have no right, except merely to sustain life, till I receive from God some answer, or see, by sound reason, that all will be paid. I began to do so that very day ! But the following night I had a most particular time before the Lord ! He showed

me (by a light on my understanding) that all my trials were appointed by himself; that they were laid on *by weight and measure*, and should go no farther than they would work for my good. He pointed me to the time at Hoxton, causing me to remember how simply I had walked by faith, and showing me my sin in having drawn back from that close communion. That although I did, in a measure, still walk with God, yet I could not say, as then, *I live not, but Christ liveth in me.** I had depended on creatures for help, and therefore he had let me feel the weight of my burdens, that I might be constrained to cast them afresh on him; and that when he had proved and tried me, he would deliver me from all my outward burdens. As a pledge of the inward liberty he would afterward bring me into, and that the ways and means of my deliverance were in his own hands, and should appear in the appointed time, those words were again brought powerfully to my mind: *If thou put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle—So shalt thou lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; and the light shall shine upon thy path. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.* He showed me that all my perplexities and trials were only the thorn hedge which his love had planted around me, to preserve me from running farther astray. It was a profitable and melting time.

From that hour I began to take my meat again with gladness and *singleness of heart*. During the above time of prayer, while I was asking light for my immediate duties, it appeared to me best to take Mr. Taylor down with us to Bath; and that from the time I did so, his family would no more be such a burden to me. And truly so it proved. For my sister met me there, and was greatly struck with compassion toward him. She helped him herself, and raised him many friends; so that all the rest of the time the family were under my roof, the children were entirely supported with the help which arose from that journey. I saw much of the order of God while from home; and after six months I returned with thank-

* The truth was, I believe, she had not that lively sense of it. She was loaded with cares; but they were all consistent with purity.—Ed.

fulness ; though not without that kind of sensation which a scourged child would have in returning to the rod.

I must here mention a circumstance which, in order of time, occurred some months before. In my deep troubles, especially after the conversation with the friend above mentioned concerning marriage, a thought occurred to my mind—"Perhaps Mr. Fletcher is to be my deliverer. May not that be the way to bring me out of these encumbrances?" But I started from the very idea, lest it should be a stratagem of Satan. We had not seen or heard from each other for more than fifteen years. Yet when striving to find out some way, that idea would frequently present itself before me.

In the month of August, 1777, going into a friend's house who was just come from the Conference, he said, "Do you know that Mr. Fletcher, of Madeley, is dying? Indeed I know not but he is dead. If he hold out a little longer, he is to go abroad; but it is a pity, for he will die by the way, being in the last stage of consumption." I heard the account with the utmost calmness. For some days I bore his burden before the Lord; and constantly offered him up to the will of God. A few days after, another of my acquaintance wrote word—"Mr. Fletcher is very bad; spits blood profusely, and perspires profusely every night. Some have great hope that prayer will raise him up; but, for my part, I believe he is a dying man, as sure as he is now a living one." As I was one day in prayer, offering him up to the Lord, these words passed my mind: "*The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.*" I said, "Lord, I dare not ask it; I leave it to thy sacred will: thy will be done!"

The following thoughts occurred to my mind—If the Lord should raise him up, and bring him in safety back to England; and he should propose such a step, could I doubt its being of God, after such an answer to prayer? Yet fearing a deception, I cried to the Lord to keep me in his narrow way, whatever I might suffer, and felt an unaccountable liberty to ask the following signs, if it really were of him. 1. That Mr. Fletcher might be raised up. 2. That he might be brought back to England. 3. That he would write to me on the subject, before he saw me, though we had been so many years asunder, without so much

as a message passing on any subject. 4. That he would, in that letter, tell me it had been the object of his thoughts and prayers for some years. It came to my mind farther, that should this occur in the end of the year 1781, it would be a still greater confirmation, as Providence seemed to point to me that season as a time of hope.

We returned from Bath in the beginning of the year 1778. I found crosses and troubles yet awaited me. Mr. *** was still my partner, and I was enabled to pay him and every creditor the full interest of the money taken up; but not to lessen the capital. Indeed, all along I was able to answer every demand. We continued our trade some time longer; but, at length, Mr. *** found my fears were better grounded than his hopes. Instead of a hundred pounds to put into my lap (as he expected) each year toward the debt, we found, on the strictest account of every grain of corn, pint of milk, or pound of butter, either sold or used in the family, that the farm did not pay its own way; though he had put many things on a cheaper plan than before. The interest also swallowed up so great a part of my income, that it was not possible to keep more than half my family with what remained. As to the kilns, I had neither money nor courage to work them. I thought of many expedients. I strove, I worked hard, I prayed; and at length proposed to the members of my family to disperse, and learn some little business, and I would allow each what I could.

Great affliction now sat on every face. Tears were shed in plenty. They alleged—Till you can get rid of this place you must live here. If you leave it empty the house will be spoiled, and that will injure the sale; and we know not what to do, nor how to turn. After being twenty years with you, (said one,) how strange will a new situation appear!—And I, (said another,) after eighteen years! And after being twelve years together, (said some others,) how hard it is to part! It was a most painful time; and I saw there was no way; but first to sell the place and then disperse.

But now a door seemed to open—a gentleman sent me word that he would buy the place, stock, lease, and all together. He was a man both of fortune and of honour, and really wished to help me out of my difficulties. The

price which he offered would bring me through all, and leave me a good income. Now I began to look up, and to form a plan for my future life, how to settle myself, and dispose of each member of my family. I gave an account of every particular, and the bargain was in part made. But, alas! our wisdom is folly!—He took a fever, and died in a few days! To add to my difficulties, just at this time my brother wrote me word, that it would be throwing away the Laytonstone estate to sell it with so long a lease upon it; and that it could not with any propriety be done. I now saw but one way—to advertise Cross Hall, and sell it for what I could; and paying that away as far as it would go, strive yearly to lessen the remaining part of the debt by my income; reserving only fifty pounds per year to live on, and out of it to help my friends. But I recollected, that I might not live long enough thus to pay the debt by my income. I had still a strong confidence in a promise given to me before I went to Bath—that no one should lose any thing by me; yet I thought it was required of me to do every thing in my power toward it.

I then proposed to myself to keep only twenty pounds per year. Nay, I thought, how can I have a right even to twenty? Justice is before mercy. They must all shift for themselves, and I will do the same. I may perhaps find some little business by which life may be sustained, till my affairs take a favourable turn. It is true, nobody calls in their money, nor seems to have a fear concerning it; yet it is my duty to take the more care for them, because of their confidence in me. It may be supposed, as I was daily striving to part with the place, and expecting to turn out, that my thoughts were frequently occupied on what way of life I should choose, as most conducive to the glory of God; and during this season, the Lord did teach me many lessons of poverty and resignation. It seemed to me no manner of life could be disagreeable, if I had but a prospect of having no debts. One day, as I was standing at a window musing on this subject, I saw a poor man driving some asses laden with sand, by which he gained his bread. As I looked on him, a spring of satisfaction ran through my mind, and I thought—I am perfectly willing to take up the business of that man. If I

proserve unsold one of the freehold cottages, the asses might graze on the common, and I could follow them with something to sell. There were but few trades which my conscience would suffer me to follow; and my abilities were equal to still fewer. But to any thing in the whole world would I turn, that was not sinful, rather than remain in debt. I do not mean that I decided to act thus; but so conformed was my mind to poverty at this time, that the thought of even that employment, as it now glanced through it, gave me real pleasure. However open I had been with my relations concerning my affairs hitherto, I determined to conceal all personal wants; for if I voluntarily gave up my income for the payment of my debts, I did not see it to be just to live on theirs; and this would not have been difficult, as I had no relation that lived within two hundred miles.

Sometimes it appeared to me quite clear, that Mr. Fletcher was the friend God would raise up for me. He was now much recovered, and about to return to England. However, I feared to lay any stress on that; but while thinking on it, I received a letter from a friend, informing me that Mr. Fletcher had settled abroad, and proposed to see England no more. This was a false report; he never had such a thought: but as it came from an intimate friend, I had reason to believe it. Thus was I cut off from the prospect of any human help! but I kept to my old word, "My soul, wait thou upon God: from him cometh my salvation."

My heart was much oppressed. I had not advertised the place, because some advised me not, saying it was the way rather to hurt the sale; nor did any one so much as inquire after it, though my mind was well known. I could now only stand still, for I knew not which way to go. During this suspense, conversing one day with my friend, Mr. * * *, he said, "Indeed I am at a loss what to do for you. I thought to have helped you greatly by the continuance of the farm; but, alas! I wish I had suffered you to advertise and sell it for any thing six years ago; and you then could have done it. It is now too late. The nation is engaged in wars: you would now sell it for a trifle. I consulted some friends the other day, who all agreed that, separate from the stock, you must not expect

above six hundred pounds for the whole place. You are ruined, madam ! You withstand the order of God. My fortune is enough for you and me. But you cannot see in my light. May the Lord stand by you ! But I cannot think of a partnership any longer ; the blame would fall on me !”

It was now the summer of 1781. The seventh of June in that year, I entered into my fourteenth year in Yorkshire. I had all along an impression, that about that season something would open. One day, as I was walking up a narrow lane which had a stile at the top, I saw a flock of sheep before me. The shepherd had hard work to drive them on ; they seemed determined to turn again. I thought, well they may, for there is no gate, no way through ; what can he wish them to do ? He forced them along, however, with dogs and sticks. I said in my mind, “ These sheep are like me, drove on in a narrow path, without any way to get out.” I followed at a distance, expecting every moment they would turn back upon me—when all at once they began to run, and I discovered a new made gate in a spacious field of turnips. In a minute they were dispersed, and fell to their full pasture with great delight. Faith whispered to my heart—So shall a door open before you in the appointed time.

That passage of the psalmist was much impressed on my mind at this time : “ The rod of the wicked shall not always remain in the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth his hand to iniquity.” And frequently those words also came with power, *The days shall be shortened* ; by which I rather thought some change would take place in the beginning of the last year of my two apprenticeships in Yorkshire. And now the seventh of June came ; and I was almost constrained to say, *Thou hast not delivered thy people at all*. There was no appearance of any such thing ; all was dark.

“ All was with sable terror hung.”

I have continued the narrative unbroken through this cloudy and dark day. All was conflict respecting the creatures ; but the Lord tempered the evil with occasional intimations that

“ Behind a frowning providence
He hid a smiling face.”

Mrs. Fletcher was thus kept from "growing weary in well doing," and enabled to "believe in the faithfulness of Him who knoweth the way of the righteous; and who "in every temptation maketh a way for their escape." The pious reader will wish to know her walk with the Lord, during this *evil day*. An extract from her journal will give a clear view of this; and it will be seen, that although this blessed woman was thus *cast down*, she *was not forsaken*; though perplexed, *she was not*, for a moment, *in despair*; she still "looked, not at the things that are seen, and which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, and eternal." She felt her weakness; yea, her utter helplessness; yet she was still confident. "She stood still to see the salvation of God."—ED.

Sunday, December, 1772.—My health is yet far from good. My head is much affected, and it is often presented to my mind that I shall have an apoplexy. It is a painful sensation. Sudden death does not appear to me as pleasant. I seem not to have my evidence clear for heaven. "Lord, spare me a little, that I may recover my strength before I go hence, and am no more seen." My nerves are very weak, and I feel a lowness which I think affects my mind as to spiritual things; but I feel a determination, whether weak or strong, to rise early, and to visit the sick. Lord, give me to make the most of my short time! and, O Jesus! give me power to keep my mind always fixed on thyself!

January 16, 1773.—Waked early, and was going to rise, but unprofitable thoughts crowded into my mind. My distressing situation, as to outward things, seemed an intolerable burden, and I was betrayed into thinking of useless plans and schemes, how to avoid this (as I think) approaching ruin. Alas! with all my anxiety and care, I can do nothing. All I strive for seems overturned. O Lord, give me the power to keep every thought stayed on thee! This day I have been a good deal hindered by company from walking by my rules, and I see I ought to receive every thing that occurs more immediately from the hand of God.

January 17.—Being very poorly, and the weather bad, I thought I would spend this day quietly at home, and set

apart three hours for solemn examination, and fresh dedication of myself to God; and I found it good so to do. At night I felt much recollection, and had freedom in meeting the people.

January 21, Friday.—For a few days past I have been enabled to keep in mind, That the cross is my chosen portion. Much taken up to-day in domestic affairs, in which I found my mind recollected. A good deal also with the poor and sick, who came for advice. I seemed to be in my own element. But when in a more public way, I do not seem as much in my place. Company does not agree with my soul.

January 25.—Rose early, but not having much time for prayer, I was off my guard, and spoke very unkindly to A. T. I have not been with God much to-day; yet I seem to have had a cry in my heart to him. At night I again gave way to a hasty spirit. Alas! I seem to love to find fault, and to oblige others to see in my light, and so justify me. O how unlike that holy simplicity I felt for a little while when at Hoxton!

February 2.—Since I wrote last, I trust I have been in a growing frame. I went this day to A——. Had a good time in speaking from those words, *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.*

February 17.—This day, in reading Mr. Fletcher's Fourth Check, I found my soul much stirred up. O for the close walk with God which he describes!

February 28.—It was this week laid on my mind to go with Richard Taylor to A——. I set out with prayer. When we had rode a few miles, the horse grew very ill. We stopped at a public inn just out of the town. In a few minutes a woman came in, who had observed us; she said, "Here are two or three of us who are seeking the Lord, just going to meet together at a house hard by,—pray will you come in?" I answered, "If you will let a few of the neighbours know, that some strangers are going to have a meeting, we will come in for half an hour." In a short time several were gathered, and we had a comfortable season with them. When the meeting was concluded, R. Taylor said, "If any of you who have a larger house, will open the door, we will spend half an hour with you in the morning before we set off." Several

offered. The largest house was fixed on, and in the morning we had a good meeting, and much of the presence of God. About ten we set out for the coal pit at R——. Here I saw a little of what the Methodist preachers see much, viz., deep poverty, dirt, and cold; but the Lord gave me freedom of speech, and some seemed to have an ear to hear. Lord! let me not be a delicate disciple!

July 24.—For a long time I have been ill, from the cold I caught at R——, and my eyes being bad from riding so many miles in a strong east wind, I have been unfit for writing since. On the 29th of May I set out for Harrowgate, where I was advised to go to drink the waters. We got in on Saturday night. The next day we were afflicted with hearing the Sabbath greatly profaned both in the house and in the street. Under my window were a company of men playing at horseshoe. It seemed a heathen country indeed. We reproved them, and never observed the Sabbath so broke again while we stayed. On Monday I began the waters, and thought, If it does not please the Lord that I should get good for my body, I will strive to get good for my soul. I will give myself up to prayer and reading. I have no opportunity here to act for the souls of others. I had nearness to God; but a great weight rested on my mind. There were no lodgings but at the great inns, and ours was full of ungodly company. They all ate at one table; but this I could not bear; therefore I got a bit in my own room when they had done. However, their talking, swearing, laughing, and music, I was forced to hear all day long. Sometimes a strange impression came on my mind, that I should be called to bear my testimony for God to all the company that were there; but the pain that it brought with it was exquisite.

After a few days, I was asked to go to Pannel, (about a mile from Harrowgate,) in order to hold a meeting at the house of a poor woman, who had taken the preachers in once or twice; at which I found many had been offended, and threatened much, so that I did not know what sort of treatment I was likely to meet with. Nevertheless I did not dare to refuse. We had a profitable time, and all was quiet. Two days after, I heard that some of the chief opposers were much affected. Glory

be to God! While we were holding the meeting, a drunken man came by, and stopped awhile; then went on to the inn where I lodged, and told some of the gentlemen that the lady who lived up stairs was preaching at Pannel. He repeated also some of the words he had heard me speak. When we came home they watched us in, and my maid (who was a pious young woman) going into the kitchen, they flocked about her, asking, in many questions, what her mistress had been doing at Pannel?

The following Sunday the company sent me a message up stairs,—“That they unanimously requested I would have such a meeting with *them* in the great ball room.” This was a trial indeed! It appeared to me, I should seem in their eyes as a bad woman, or a stage player; and I feared they only sought an opportunity to behave rudely. Yet I considered, I shall see these people no more till I see them at the judgment seat of Christ. And shall it then be said to me, “You might that day have warned us, but you would not.” I answered them immediately, That I would wait on them at the time appointed. They behaved very well, and the presence of the Lord was with us. The following Sunday they made the same request. Much more company came in, even from High Harrowgate; but the Lord bore me through; and glory be to him we had some fruit. The next day I returned home, better in health, and comfortable in mind. All praise be to the Lord!

Sunday, Oct. 17.—Reflecting on the condition of Israel at the Red Sea, I thought, there is the picture of my situation. I also then will “stand still and see the salvation of God. Thy will be done!” Yes, my adorable Lord, strip me of every penny; bring me not only to poverty, but what I far more dread, to insolvency. Yes! strip me even of reputation; let me be as “the filth and off-scouring of all things,” only let me have thy approval, and all shall be well. Yes, I will praise thee for all, and most for the severe.

Oct. 18.—Finding the family (which now consisted of men and women, boys and girls) much laid on my mind; in particular the children, some of the biggest of whom seemed getting into snares; and considering that several must soon (because of my circumstances) be thrust out

into the world, I spent some time in pleading with the Lord, that he would not let the expense and labour which had been laid out on these orphans be all in vain, but that they might be truly brought to God; though I saw we must be dispersed, through the losses and trials which are come upon me. The Bible lay open before me, and I cast my eyes on those words, which were applied with power to my heart: "Yet, behold, there shall be a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters,—behold, they shall come forth unto thee, and thou shalt see their ways and their doings; and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil I have brought on Jerusalem. And they shall comfort you when you shall see their ways and their doings; and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done, saith the Lord."

Saturday, Nov. 6.—I have received some upbraiding letters, asking me if I yet believed I should see those words fulfilled, "I will restore to you the ears the locusts have eaten." In the midst of my trials, it is sometimes presented to my mind,—Perhaps the Lord will draw me out of all this by marriage. Opportunities of this kind occur frequently; but no sooner do I hear the offer, but a clear light seems to shine on my mind, as with this voice: You will neither be holier nor happier with this man. But I find Mr. Fletcher sometimes brought before me, and the same conviction does not intervene. His eminent piety, and the remembrance of some little acts of friendship in our first acquaintance, look to me sometimes like a pointing of the finger of Providence. And yet I fear lest it should be a trick of Satan to hurt my mind. I know not even that we shall see each other on this side eternity. Lord, let me not be drawn into a snare! Well, this I resolve on, to strive against the thought; and never to do the least thing toward a renewal of our correspondence. No—I will fix my eye on *the hundred forty and four thousand*; praying only to live and die to God alone. Whatever is the will of God, I believe he will show it to me, and may his holy will be done. A few nights ago, as my mind was burdened lest Satan was about to get an advantage over me, I cried to the Lord, and felt much sorrow. In order to compose my mind, (I did what

I seldom do,) I prayed the Lord to direct me in opening to some passage of Scripture which might draw me to himself, and compose me into a quiet frame. I took up, as I thought, a little Bible which lay before me, but (by accident) one of the maids had put her small Common Prayerbook in the place. With prayer I opened it, and cast my eyes on these words: "Almighty God, who at the beginning did create our first parents, Adam and Eve, and did sanctify and join them together in marriage, pour upon you the riches of his grace, sanctify and bless you, that you may please him both in body and soul, and live together in holy love unto your lives' end." I was struck with the words; but saw the safest way was a quiet attention to the will of my God, on which I strove to lean my weary spirit.

Monday November, 8,—My mind is this morning affected in a solemn manner. It seems to me I have yet more of the cross to expect, and more bitter cups to drink. O my Lord, what breaking do I need! Well, do all thy will, so I may but feel that promise accomplished, *Thou shalt walk with me in white*. Last night I went to bed recollected, and in the spirit of prayer, but had a dream which I cannot understand, though I believe it to be from God. Perhaps what I know not now I may know hereafter. I thought I was in a room with S. C., A. T., and some others. Mr. Fletcher was there, sitting with us, and speaking of the things relating to a walk with God. At last he said, as it were abruptly, "I must go to Bristol: will any of you go with me?" A woman who sat by him said, "No, not for the world. You know not what you will have to suffer: the devil walks there, and you will have all the powers of hell to grapple with." He replied, "I care not for ten thousand devils, for the name of Jesus will conquer them all!" He then, turning to me, said, "Will you go with me? Not to help me to fight, but to help me to praise." I replied, "I will go; for while we trust in Jesus, all the powers of hell cannot harm us." I had no remembrance during my dream of his being a single man, or any thing that had passed in my mind before. In all I said and did, I seemed acted upon by another spirit rather than my own.

November 15.—In reading Mr. Elliott's Life this day

I received a fresh conviction, how blessed an employment it is to receive and comfort the messengers of the Lord, who have left their houses, and all the conveniences of life, to preach the Gospel. God hath given me a home, though Christ had not where to lay his head; and here I have the honour and privilege of giving a cup of water to his prophets. Lord, teach me to do it with more diligence!

December 2.—This day, as brother Bramah was meeting my band, he related an anecdote of a young man, which was blessed to me. He was leader of a band of young men, all desirous of giving their whole hearts to God; but it seemed to them they could not see the way clearly. One night he dreamed he was at the bottom of a deep but dry well, with his little company. He told them if they remained there they must perish, and exhorted them to strive hard to get out. Accordingly they exerted all their strength, endeavouring to get up, but all in vain. At last they were quite discouraged, and said, "What must we do?" "Truly," said he, "I know not;" but looking up, he saw in the sky a little bright spot which did not appear larger than half a crown. He looked at it for some time, when feeling himself move, he looked down into the well, and found to his surprise he was risen some feet from the bottom. As soon, however, as he looked down he began to sink again. "O," said he, "now I have found the way out of the well! It is by looking steadily on yonder bright spot;" on which fixing his eye, he was brought up in a short time, and his feet were set on firm ground. This discovery of the way of faith was greatly blessed both to him and his brethren. I am convinced, could I thus constantly *look to Jesus as the author and finisher of my faith*, the work of sanctification would be going on without hinderance.

December 17.—Last Friday I went to Leeds to meet some classes. O how much do I suffer for every meeting I propose! The enemy follows me hard with such buffetings and discouragements as I cannot express. However, I determined to go, and leave the event to God. At Mrs. C.'s many came in to tea, and being a mixed company, I thought, Lord, give me something profitable to say, or keep me silent; and blessed be God it was a profitable time. After tea I conversed alone with one in

deep distress,—and read in the providences she mentioned, a wonderful display of the wisdom, condescension, and guardian care of the Lord Jesus. When I returned into the dining room, a large class was ready for me, and the Lord was very present. Glory be to his name, he never fails his poor unworthy dust! Then Mrs. Clapham asked me if my strength would hold out to meet the children. I assented, and also found some liberty. Immediately I began the second class, and there I found the Lord was very good indeed; but my strength almost failed. After the people were gone, I talked closely with Mr. H.; I trust not quite in vain. It being now late, we got a little supper, and went to bed. I had but little rest, being very feverish. Indeed I am seldom well in a town. Next day we visited several in peculiar states and circumstances, and here also I saw the Lord's hand. In the afternoon I returned home in peace.

December 20.—This was on the whole a good day. Taking some time in the Hermitage, my soul was refreshed. My situation is perplexing; but I feel myself calmly fixed on the will of God. I can, I do, believe he will not let me take any step that is not for his glory. And if I do not get out of his order, I care for nothing else.

December 30.—Waked early, and after losing some time, (though kept from unprofitable thoughts,) I arose about five, and was blessed in prayer, but afterward found myself very stupid, dull, and heavy. I went to see some sick people, and their words were animating. I was humble while they recorded several meetings in which my words had been blessed to them. O my God, let me not help others into liberty, and myself remain in bondage. I heard also to-day of some in Leeds that were brought into a fuller measure of love,—and that they had been blessed ever since my being there. Ah! Lord, how will this rise against me if I am not filled with thee! On all sides I hear of my words being blessed, and yet I am only a poor pipe through which it passes. Lord, let me never rest till I have *full redemption in thy blood*. Sometimes all my soul is on the stretch; but then I rest again, and other cares my heart divide. *How long! O Lord! How long!*

January 1, 1774.—And do I yet see another year?

Lord, with what improvement! Shine on my soul, while I examine for an answer. Blessed be thy name! I have more faith than last year, I have more power, and my mouth is more open to speak for thee. I am more deeply convinced of my vileness, which is such as none can conceive. I am also more on stretch for holiness.

January 15, Friday night.—This day I set apart as a fast. All the morning I was tossed much with thoughts of temporal difficulties, R. T. being quite unwilling to come into any scheme I can propose. In the afternoon I found more liberty in prayer; I was as in an agony. I said, “Lord, if it can be consistent with thy justice to make such a sinner as I entirely holy, do it! Do it for thy name’s sake! Give me once more what thou gavest me at Hoxton. Do it, Lord! in thy own way; I submit myself to any condition; only make and keep me holy.” My life seemed as if it would go from me, and my hands were so strained by the grasp, (which I afterward found they had of each other,) that I could hardly use them for some time. But I did not gain the blessing I wanted.

February 6.—Blessed be my adorable Saviour, I am kept from all condemnation. I feel I am so *born of God*, *I do not commit sin*. But I have not that liberty of soul, that close communion which I want, and believe to be my privilege. O my Saviour, shine more clearly! let me fully enter into the good land!

Saturday, February 19.—Glory be to God, I have been kept in peace this week, and my soul seems nearer to God. Yet I do not seem to have got “salvation appointed for walls and bulwarks;”—I am but a little child. But, “Lord, I am thine, save me.” As to my outward affairs, they are not now such a weight, I have cast them on the Lord, and I embrace his will. He, without whom “a sparrow does not fall to the ground,” will not leave nor forsake his poor helpless creature.

Monday, 22.—Yesterday was a day of trial. Mr. *** preached at Morley, and then came here. He really grows in grace, and his word is attended with power. I was much pained in conversing with him to see the grief of mind occasioned by his attachment. O my God, indulge me in this! Show me some way out of this embarrassment.

Saturday, 27.—A solemn day to my soul. I was kept in peace while busy in domestic affairs. Home always agrees with my soul. It is seven weeks to-morrow, since I have been constantly kept as the clay before the potter : yet still how far below my privilege I live !

Sunday, September 26.—I did not rise quite in so spiritual a frame as I wished. Lord, let me not lose ground. I was blessed in the meeting afterward ;—and in reading the Essay on Truth, in Mr. Fletcher's *Equal Check*, page 162. Lord, give me to live in that constant act of faith ! It is the very marrow of the Gospel. How delightfully it is distinguished from Antinomian presumption ! It has of a truth been food to my soul. In prayer this night I found power to lay open all my troubles before the Lord, and to take fast hold on that word, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." I cannot tell how to express the power I felt in those words, *All these things !* I saw Jesus had undertaken my whole cause.

December.—I feel my faith rather increased. I have this day been examining the state of my soul as to the progress I have made this year, and inquiring of the Lord why I do not grow much faster, and sink into a much deeper acquaintance with God. It appears to me that the reason is, I do not valiantly resist every thought that presents itself, but suffer my eyes to be turned off from my Saviour.—In particular, I lose much time in searching for ways out of my present trials. It seems often a duty to do so ; and my mind is carried away, till recalled by that word, "Thou canst not make one hair white or black."

February 1, 1775.—I was much blessed at the Wednesday meeting. For some time these words have been with me, "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he will give thee the desire of thy heart."

February 28.—I fear my soul has lost ground this month. O what a narrow path do we tread ! How true also is that word, *Without me ye can do nothing !* In the beginning of this month I wrote that precious word, *Delight thyself in the Lord* ; but, alas ! instead of delight, I feel sorrow of heart ! A little time since I had a particular trial with * * *. What was proposed seemed hard and

unreasonable; and I forgot the Christian motto, "Do good, and suffer ill." I got my eye turned off from Jesus, and then I no longer felt the love that never faileth. This deeply wounded me. At night I felt a drop of healing balm, but my spirit remains to this day much discouraged.

May.—*I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit.* My affairs are perplexing indeed! Yet something seems to say, *It is for an appointed time.* But all this I should not regard, if my soul was always filled with love. I sometimes seem to get all obstacles removed, and then I reflect the image of my Saviour, and all is quiet, calm, and peace. Floods of trial do not seem to move me. But though I thus taste of the *pure river* now and then, I do not *abide in the faith*, and therefore I do not abide in liberty.

May 28.—This day I set apart for prayer, to inquire of the Lord, why I am so held in bondage about speaking in public. It cannot be expressed what I suffer—it is known only to God what trials I go through in that respect. Lord, give me more humility, and then I shall not care for any thing but thee! There are a variety of reasons—why it is such a cross. The other day one told me "He was sure I must be an impudent woman; no modest woman, he was sure, could proceed thus." Ah! how glad would nature be to find out—Thou, Lord, dost not require it! Mr. William Bramah observed to-day, "The reason why your witness is not more clear, is because you do not glorify God by believing, and more freely declaring what he hath done for your soul." He spake much on these words, "What things soever ye ask in prayer, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." His words came with power, and my soul got a farther hold on Jesus. I do see that by his death he hath purchased perfect salvation for *all who believe*; and that we receive it in proportion as we thus believe. "Be it unto you according to your faith," is the word of the Lord. Then I will, I do cast my whole soul on thee! O let me find *salvation as walls and bulwarks!*

September 10, Sunday.—I rose this morning with a sore weight on my mind. It was given out for me to be at D——. There was much wind and rain, and the roads were very bad. I feared the journey. I feared also I should have nothing to say when I came there;—I leared

all manner of things. Those words, however, came to my mind, "Take no thought what ye shall say." I then felt myself led to consider these words, "Repent! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." I found some liberty in speaking from them, and the people were affected. As I was riding back, I clearly saw I was called to stand still; to live the present moment, and always to praise the Lord that his will was done, though I might have much to suffer. I had a clear conviction, God brought me to Yorkshire, and that I had a message to this people: and that notwithstanding the darkness which hung over my situation, I was at present where God would have me. Well then, answered my heart, if I am but in his will I am safe; for where the Lord leads me, there he will be my light.

September 12, Tuesday.—This day I am thirty-six years old. I have been throughout the day kept in the spirit of prayer. Lord, I offer up myself, body and soul, to thee! It came to me, *Thy captivity is long*. Well, I will wait thy time, O Lord!

November 5, Sunday.—Did not rise early, but was kept recollected. In the morning I was watchful as to words, but at noon I talked too long with A. T. That is an admirable rule of Mr. Wesley's, never to be more than an hour in the same company, where it can be avoided. I also spoke some evil of M. M. by repeating what was not needful. O when shall I know what that meaneth, "He that offendeth not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body."

November 12, Sunday.—Went to bed late last night, but in a degree recollected, though rather hurried with fear lest I should lie too long in the morning. When I rose, I found the weather was very severe. However, I went to A—. The extreme cold almost took away my senses. Yet we had a comfortable meeting, and many people.

January 5, 1776.—I find it very hard to be recollected in private prayer. To-day I tried the following plan with some advantage. I placed my watch on the bed, that I might know when the hour was out. I first strove to consider myself as in the presence of God—as before the throne, worshipping with the heavenly host. Then I strove with recollection to repeat the Lord's prayer, giving each

sentence full scope in my mind. In the words, *Our Father*, I felt a powerful remembrance of Him "after whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," and with delight I then repeated, *Hallowed be thy name!* That sentence, *Thy kingdom come*, was much opened to my soul. I see that kingdom is the great *promise of the Father*, which Christ said he would send upon his children. That indeed is "the kingdom which suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." As I repeated, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*, I felt

"The will of God my sure defence,
Nor earth nor hell can pluck me thence."

Give us this day our daily bread. Is he not our own Father? Is he not engaged to provide for his babes? Well then, thought I, freedom from debt is more to me than bread, and will he not preserve me from this? It was then brought to my mind, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." In the next petition, *Forgive me as I forgive*, O! what a cry did I feel for more love! Lord, must I say,

"That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me?"

Ah no! I will rather cry out,

"Mercy, good Lord! mercy I ask,
It is the total sum;
For mercy, Lord, is all my plea,
O let thy mercy come!"

"With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again!" O how would that cut me off from all hope, were it not for those words, "The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin!" *Lead us not into temptation.* How hath this prayer been answered to me! How would I have run into ruin, but thou didst not suffer the temptation to approach. Thou didst keep my powers as *with bit and bridle*, and conquered for me; and that when I did not strive, or even know my danger. *But deliver us from evil.* Lord, I am a desolate woman, who hath no helper but thee. O keep me from evil of every kind; "thoroughly purge away my dross, and take away all my tin." *For all is thine for ever and ever.* This I am assured of, when the soul turns inward to seek the Lord, that moment he turns to it and smiles upon it; and if it abide with him, it will always

grew. But as of a healthy child, one does not see it grow, and yet it doth; so the soul, surrounded by temptation, may not discover its growth; nevertheless, the sun does not more freely give its light and warmth to the earth, than the beams of the immaterial Sun meet the seeking soul.

January 21.—I went to-day to see some sick, among whom was the mother of a young man, who, about four years ago, came to our Sunday night's meeting. It pleased the Lord to awaken him, and soon after he died happy. On his deathbed he entreated his mother and sister, that they would attend the meetings as he had done. Some time after, the eldest sister came to me for advice among the other patients. Conversing with her, I perceived she had some convictions, and invited her to meet with a few persons whom I had collected. She did so, and seemed to drink in instruction as the parched ground the softening shower. After a few weeks she was set at liberty. She was now desirous her mother might share in her felicity. She begged me to visit her, as she was too infirm to come out. Accordingly I went, but found her so ignorant, and so exceedingly weak as to her understanding, that it seemed almost impossible to do her any good. After some time, she appeared under some concern; and her complaint then was, to use her own words, "O that I could but get a smile from God!" Her convictions continued to increase, and she would cry, "O what shall I do? Shall I never be saved? O how easily did Betty come to it, while I cannot get one smile, not one look from God! The face of the Almighty is all dark to me, as dark as darkness itself." The Lord was then pleased to lay her on a sick bed, in a very painful disorder. Finding nothing gave her any relief, and believing she must die, she was in great distress, and said to her daughter, "My dear, my pain is greater than I can bear! I cannot live over this night. I pray thee go to mistress, and see if she can order me something." "O mother," said she, "I know not how to go, we have had so much in former illnesses. I fear it will seem as if we were imposing on her; let me go to the doctor again!" The old woman lying in great distress, at length cried out, "*Thou* wilt order me a medicine, Lord! I can believe thou wilt. But shall I have no share in thy glory?"

Then, as she expressed it, "It went through my mind with power, 'I will have mercy on thee! I will receive thee at the eleventh hour!' O what did I then feel! Such comfort came over me as I can never tell. I did not mind the pain; I believed it would be removed. But my soul! O! what a change did it feel! Why, the dark face of God was all light! I thought before, that he hated me for my sins; but now I saw he loved me. Yes, I saw he had loved me all my life, and had been inviting me to come to him; but I did not understand. And now, O! how I love him! Yes, I love my God better than I ever loved my best bairn (child.) O it is a brave thing! And what a change it makes! Why, one is quite a new creature! And it has made me see things quite different from what I did before. I used to chafe and fret, when any thing went wrong, and thought things were very hard; but now I see nothing is hard; all is love! So I never do complain now."*

Her daughter came to me, and told me (as well as she could) how her mother was; but her disorder was so peculiar, and so badly described, that I was on the point of saying, I cannot do any thing for her, when all at once a mixture came into my mind. I went and made it up. The first spoonful gave her ease; and soon after quite removed the disorder. All I can say on this extraordinary case is, the Lord would have it so. The medicine was not an opiate, but in itself a very simple thing; but when the Lord will bless, *who shall stay his hand?* Thou art a God who hears and answers prayer.

January 30.—Last night I met the classes at A——. Much of the power of the Lord was present. But, O! I

* As it was in the days of the personal ministry of the *Son of God*, so it is in these his Spirit's Gospel days:—"He hides those things from the wise and prudent, and revealeth them unto babes. The weary and heavy laden, who believe," Matt. xi, 25-30. How easy it is to forget this! How hard to keep it in remembrance, and to allow it its due weight! Did ever any man, since the days of St. Paul, more fully, or more constantly, appreciate this than Mr. Wesley? It was the principle that governed and directed his whole life and labours; and on which account he denominated the fruit of those labours, "*The work of God.*" A work which he began, supported, and prospered; and in respect to which Mr. Wesley, notwithstanding his unparalleled activity, always considered himself as a mere passive instrument.—Ed.

am not what I would be, Lord! How is it I seem to get so slowly forward? This morning I rose early, and found it good. Self-denial agrees with my soul, but I use too little of it.

February 4.—Last Wednesday I had a remarkable preservation. Going to take my bark mixture, my mind being much taken up with what I had been writing, I took a bottle of laudanum, which through a strange providence was not then locked up, a circumstance which seldom happens. I took four teaspoonfuls and a half of it. As soon as I had swallowed it, I perceived what it was; and thought I must take a large dose of ipecacuanha. I looked for it, but could not find it, though it stood very near me. I knew my life depended on the present moment; and thought, perhaps the Lord has appointed to take me this way. I found my mind calmly stayed on God, and those words came across it, "These signs shall follow those that believe: if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." I went into Mrs. Crosby's room, and told them what had happened. Having medicines in the parlour, we went down to look there for the ipecacuanha, but there was none. We returned to my room and found it. I took about thirty grains. We then joined in prayer. For half an hour it had no effect. I thought it would then have no power, as the opiate must in that time have taken hold of the nerves of the stomach. But it soon after operated, and brought up (it seems) both the laudanum and ipecacuanha. Fearing the whole had not come away, they gave me another dose; but that had no effect at all. I felt, however, not the least inconvenience. In the night, I a little rambled, and was restless, but not ill. On the whole, it was a comfortable dispensation. I had been always tempted to think, if I should be called to face death in full health, I should shrink from it. But now that I fully believed it to be just before me, my soul did calmly wait on the Lord, though not with joy, yet with quiet peace!

Last night I dreamed I was telling the Lord he was the loadstone, and my soul the needle. That his will was the north pole, to which my heart should turn, however tossed about. To-day Miss Ritchie came. I have had some profitable conversation with her. She is indeed a

blessed soul ; and I feel more of the immediate presence of God since that conversation.

May 5.—I had a meeting some days ago at B——, where an odd circumstance occurred. I observed (as I was speaking on these words, *The Master is come, and calleth for thee*) a gentleman among the congregation, who looked with great earnestness. As soon as the meeting was over. I rode home, where I had not long been, till this man came after me. He is a stranger, and came into these parts about business. He felt a great alarm in his soul ; and declared he had always before thought himself very righteous ; but he now feared he should go to hell ; and insisted on telling me his whole life, and confessing (as he termed it) all his sins. He was very long ; and I feared there was in his mind a mixture of insanity. He told me he was building a house for an assembly, but he would go home, and turn it into a preaching house, if I would come and speak in it, that his neighbours might get the light he had got. I strove to prevail on him to return to the friend's house from whence he came, and to set off the next morning for his own country, where he told me he had a good wife and family ; but he insisted he would not leave me till he had found the Lord ! At length he said he felt some comfort, and would go and spend most of the night in prayer. Next morning he was more calm ; and on my promising to answer him if he wrote to me, he went away. Satan made use of this occurrence to bring me into discouragement respecting public speaking ; but some years after, I heard a most pleasing account of this gentleman, that he had indeed turned his assembly into a Methodist preaching house, and that himself and family were joined to the society.

June 11, Tuesday.—Mrs. Westerman came here on the Thursday before Whitsunday, and stayed ten days. She came in full expectation of a blessing ; and in the Sunday night meeting, as I was in the last prayer, I felt it on my mind to plead with the Lord that he would seal some soul as his abode that night. Just then the answer came. She felt the heart of stone taken away, and has ever since rejoiced with exceeding joy. Tuesday I went to B——. When we came, we found the man at whose house we were to have been, died that morning. Another offered

his barn, though with seeming fear ; but when we came to the house, he either could not, or would not find the key. So we stood in an open place, with some serious people from other parts, and some of the careless inhabitants. However, all behaved well, and I found liberty in enforcing these words, " Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace,—hereby good shall come unto thee."

July 20.—This day I found a good deal of liberty in prayer, especially in pleading, " If it be thy will I should be holy,—if it be the great design of thy death,—O, then, let it all be answered on thy poor creature ! Let all thy will be done !" It seems to me I fall short in every thing. I am continually making rules and plans, and yet I keep to none with any degree of exactness. Nevertheless, I see it well to make them ; for though I never come up to what I propose, yet I always gain something ; every fresh effort seems to put me a little forward. I have of late been reading Dr. Cheyne's works ; I see self-denial very beautiful, and of profit both for soul and body.

July 24.—H. S. gave a good account of the work wrought on her soul. I think it is about three months ago I providentially met with her in a class, which I went to meet about a mile from home. She appeared that night all ear, and quite awakened to the desire of *loving God with all her heart*. I felt much liberty in conversing with her, and asked her to come to the meeting, which she did the first opportunity, and seemed quite broken down ;—expressing herself in such a manner concerning her inbred sin, as plainly showed the Lord had plucked away every covering. While we were at prayer, she felt a degree of living faith ; and last night she gave the following account : " After I left you I was very happy. I went to bed, wondering at the great miracle Jesus had wrought in saving such a sinner. When I awoke in the morning, (O, what a precious morning to me !) I had an impression as if my dear Lord stood just by me, and said, ' I will cause all my goodness to pass before thee.' I cried out, ' O, it is thee, my Lord ! ' Then the words came to me, ' I have set thee as a signet upon mine arm, as a seal upon my heart. Thy sun shall no more go down. I will be thine everlasting light, and thy God, thy glory.' O, what rapture did I feel, and so I do still ! He is all day

long speaking so sweetly to me, and I have such views of his glorious love as I cannot express. O, never sure did the Lord do such a miracle ! For I do believe there never was such a vile polluted creature as I have been !”*

August 30.—Yesterday it was given out for me to be at ——. For a whole month it lay on my mind. None, O my God, but thyself, knows what I go through for every public meeting ! I am often quite ill with the prospect. When the day came, the wind was violent, which is a thing I have a great fear of, because it so affects my head ; for after riding several miles in it, I am scarcely in my senses. And I suppose it is worse to me, not having been used to ride on horseback till I came into Yorkshire. A little before I set out, I said, “ O Lord, thou canst still the wind ; but *thy will be done.*” When we had got about a hundred yards from the house, the wind fell, and we had no more trouble from it all the way. My hearing was much affected at this time, so that I feared I should not be able to converse with any person. But before I got to the place, my hearing was as good as ever it was in my life,—and I was not at all fatigued ! There were many persons got together ; and after spending about two hours with them, the time for the meeting drew on. We went to a barn prepared for that purpose by the kind friend who had invited us. There was a good congregation ; and I found some enlargement in speaking on those words which came then to my mind, “ Hath the Lord as much delight in sacrifices and burnt-offerings as in obeying the voice of the Lord ? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” As I was speaking on the word *hearken*, I felt the Lord peculiarly present. The people would fain have had me stay all night ; but for some reasons I thought it better to return ;—which we immediately did, and reached home a little before eleven.

September 7, Tuesday.—Glory be to God ! this has been a comfortable day. My soul is sweet in expectation that I shall be filled with the Spirit ; and that I shall yet see the time, when by my whole life I shall bring glory to

* There are ten thousand happy believers that would dispute that point with her.—ED.

God. I feel power to abandon my whole cause into his hand. O Lord, thou hast undertaken for me; I feel thou hast; I feel also great resignation as to the life or death of thy dear servant. O keep him, Lord, as *the apple of thine eye*. I believe thou wilt order all right; and I shall regard him with an immortal friendship, that will be free from snares, and all Divine. But it is strange, when I am offering him up, the words come, "The prayer of faith shall heal the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." I do not understand, but *I stand still*.

September 14.—Yesterday I was a good deal oppressed. I had undertaken to meet the old members of our society apart, and to propose to them a renewal of our covenant;—to set our hearts and hands afresh to the work of God. Glory be to his name, I was carried better through it than I could have hoped for. Some little touches of enthusiasm were beginning to creep in among us, which I thought the more dangerous, as the meeting now grows very numerous, members being added from all sides. Yet was it a great trial for me to have to reprove them,—
1. Because many are much farther advanced in grace than I am. 2. I was deeply conscious it is one of the most delicate subjects in the world, and requires both much wisdom and much love, to extinguish false fire, and yet to keep up the true. All the day I kept pleading before the Lord, mostly in these words of Solomon,—“Ah! Lord, how shall I, who am but a child, go in and out before this thy chosen people?”

September 17, Tuesday.—Glory be to thee, my faithful Lord! O that I could always trust! Then I should always praise! Last Sabbath morning I went, according to appointment, to Goker. I arose early, and in pretty good health. The day was fine, though rather hot. About eleven we came to Huddersfield, and called on Mrs. H. She had asked me to lodge there on my return, and have a meeting, saying many had long desired it, and there would be no preaching there on that day. I felt immediately the people laid on my mind, and that I had a message to that place,—and said, If the Lord permit, I will. She then said, “We will give it out at noon.” We rode forward. Benjamin Cock met us, and kindly conducted us over the moors. When we came to his hut, all was

clean, and victuals enough provided for twenty men. But I was so heated with the ride, (near twenty miles,) and with the great fire on which they so liberally cooked for us, that I could not eat. My drinking nothing but water seemed also quite to distress them. They said the meeting had been given out in many places, and they believed we should have between two and three thousand people. That I did not believe; but there was indeed such a number, and of such a rabble as I scarce ever saw. At one we went out to the rocks, a place so wild that I cannot describe it. The crowd which got around us was so great, that by striving which should get first to the quarry. (where we were to meet,) they rolled down great stones among the people below us, so that we feared mischief would be done. Blessed be God, none were hurt! I passed on among them on the top of the hill, not knowing whither I went. Twice I was pushed down by the crowd, but rose without being trampled on. We stopped on the edge of a spacious quarry filled with people, who were tolerably quiet. I gave out that hymn, *The Lord my pasture shall prepare, &c.* When they were a little settled, I found some liberty in speaking to them; and I believe most heard. As we returned into the house, numbers followed, and filled it so full we could not stir. I conversed with them, but could not get much answer. They stood like people in amaze, and seemed as if they could never have enough. Many wept and said, "When will you come again?" We then set off for Huddersfield. I felt very much fatigued, and began to think, How shall I be able to fulfil my word there? As we rode along, brother Taylor said, "I think I ought to tell you my mind. I wish we could ride through Huddersfield, and not stop. For I know there are some there who do not like women to speak among them, and I fear you will meet with something disagreeable." I looked to the Lord, and received, as it seemed to me, the following direction: If I have a word to speak from him, he will make my way. If not, the door will be shut. I am only to show the meekness of wisdom, and leave all to God. Those words then came with power to my mind,—

"The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
And feed me with a shepherd's care;

His presence shall my wants supply,
And guard me with a watchful eye;
My noonday walks he shall attend,
And all my midnight hours defend."

When we got to Huddersfield, I told them the conversation we had had by the way, and the posture of my mind; which was calm as the limpid stream, and quiet as an infant. I perceived his fears were not groundless, and said, "Well, my friends, I will do as you will, either stay with you this night, or go forward directly, for I follow a lamblike Lord, and I would imitate his life and spirit." They said they believed but few of the principal persons had any objection, and the people much desired it; besides, as it had been given out at noon, there would be a great many strangers, whom it would not be well to disappoint. It was then agreed that we should have the meeting in the house, where they usually had the preaching; but when we came there the crowd was very great, and the place so hot, that I feared I should not be able to speak at all. I stood still, and left all to God. A friend gave out a hymn; during which some fainted away. Brother Taylor said, "I perceive it is impossible for us to stay within doors, the people cannot bear the heat, and there are more without than are within." We then came out. My head swam with the heat; I scarce knew which way I went, but seemed carried along by the people, till we stopped at a horseblock, placed against a wall on the side of the street, with a plain wide opening before it. On the steps of this I stood, and gave out, "Come, ye sinners, poor and needy," &c. While the people were singing the hymn, I felt a renewed conviction to speak in the name of the Lord. My bodily strength seemed to return each moment. I felt no weariness, and my voice was stronger than in the morning, while I was led to enlarge on these words, "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us." I felt great enlargement while endeavouring to show the purity of our Judge, whose eyes could endure no iniquity. That as a Lawgiver he was just and holy, and the thing gone out of his lips must stand:—*The soul that sinneth shall die.* But the Lord is also our King, and he will save us. First, by convincing us of the purity of his law, and

the justness of our punishment, who have broken it. Secondly, by making us tremble before that Judge whose eyes are as a flame of fire. Thirdly, by leading us to Him who is our "Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,"—who now manifests himself to the soul as *the propitiation for our sins*. And, fourthly, as a King, he goes on in the believer conquering and to conquer, till the eternal reign of Jesus commences in the soul; which, as the "morning light, grows brighter and brighter unto the perfect day;"—till "the perfect love which casts out all fear," marks the soul as the abode and "habitation of God through the Spirit." Deep solemnity sat on every face. I think there was scarce a cough to be heard, or the least motion; though the number gathered was very great. So solemn a time I have seldom known; my voice was clear enough to reach them all; and when we concluded, I felt stronger than when we began.

They then desired me to speak to each of the women joined in the society, which took me till near ten. The room we went into for that purpose was a damp stone floor, so that I could hardly move my legs when I came out. But they kindled a fire, and after getting some refreshment I grew better. About twelve I went to bed, and rested under the shadow of the Almighty till morning, when I found myself remarkably well. After having breakfasted with brother Goldthorp, where we had a lively conversation concerning holiness, I came home with much thankfulness and peace.

October 8.—I was to-day at Clackhightown, and saw the hand of the Lord in many things. I have been more abundantly led to reflect on the difficulties of the path I am called in. I know the power of God which I felt when standing on the horseblock in the street at Huddersfield: but at the same time I am conscious how ridiculous I must appear in the eyes of many for so doing. Therefore, if some persons consider me as an impudent woman, and represent me as such, I cannot blame them. Again, many say, If you are called to preach, why do you not do it constantly, and take a round as a preacher? I answer, Because that is not my call. I have many duties to attend to, and many cares which they know nothing about. I must therefore leave myself to His guidance who hath the

sole right of disposing of me. Again they say, "Why do you not give out, I am to preach? Why call it a meeting?" I answer, Because that suits my design best. First, It is less ostentatious. Secondly, It leaves me at liberty to speak more or less, as I feel myself led. Thirdly, It gives less offence to those who watch for it. Others object, "Why, yours is a Quaker call; why then do you not join them at once? You are an offence to us. Go to the people whose call is the same as your own; here nobody can bear with you." I answer, Though I believe the Quakers have still a good deal of God among them, yet I think the Spirit of the Lord is more at work among the Methodists; and while I see this, though they were to toss me about as a football, I would stick to them like a leech. Besides, I do nothing but what Mr. Wesley approves; and as to reproach thrown by some on me, what have I to do with it, but quietly go forward, saying, *I will be still more vile*, if my Lord requires it? Indeed for none but thee, my Lord, would I take up this sore cross. But thou hast done more for me. O do thy own will upon me in all things! Only make me what thou wouldst have me to be! Only make me holy, and then lead me as thou wilt!

August, 1777.—I heard Mr. Wesley preach from these words, "Dearly beloved, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." A sweet discourse it was, showing the great danger of every earthly gratification. This lesson, he said, might be learned even from the body. As often as we take down food, we swallow so many seeds of death, by causing so many more particles of earth to adhere to, and clog our vessels, and so hasten our dissolution. And without great watchfulness so it would be with our souls. If we were not on our guard, human comforts received would also bring the soul nearer to death, instead of being a step to life. It is truly said of worldly joy, "It does with powerful charm hold down the mind, and sensualize the soul."

Sunday noon.—I heard him on these words, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." His strength was wonderful, and much power attended the word. Lord, be the strength of thy dear

servant, and his portion for ever ! At night he lodged with us.

August 14.—Last night dear Mr. Wesley came here again. After supper he read a letter from Lady Maxwell, in which she expresses a most sweet state of soul ; observing that if the name of Jesus is but mentioned, her heart is like the key of a well tuned instrument, when its unison is touched. O how sweet a progress has she made ! Lord, let me do so likewise !

Last Thursday Mr. Wesley preached at Daw Green, on “I will give to every one of you according to your works.” First, he considered, What were the works. Secondly, What the reward. The works, he said, were threefold. First, What the man *is*. Secondly, What he *does*. Thirdly, What he *suffers*. 1. All he *is*, that is right, shall have its reward :—all “the fruit of the Spirit,—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness, patience, faith, self-denial, fortitude ;”—all these are *the work of God*, and all received through Christ,—*above all, love*, which is *the image of God*. 2. All he *does*, all his works of piety and mercy, all that is wrought in faith ; nay, the most common labours of his daily business, if done in a spirit of sacrifice, shall not be forgotten ; for it is said of servants, by the apostle, for their encouragement, that when they “obey and serve men, with singleness of heart, they serve the Lord Jesus Christ.” 3. All he *suffers*. Not one cross taken up in obedience to the will of God, but it shall have its reward. But what is the reward ? First, The very nature of each grace necessarily brings its reward. The more faith, patience, courage, and perseverance, the more holiness will be brought into the soul, and consequently the soul will be rendered more like God, and more capable of *fellowship with him* : and in proportion to our fellowship with God must be our happiness. But beside these, there is a reward of infinite free mercy (over and above what flows from inherent holiness) bestowed on each grace, and on each action done for God, and each cross borne for his sake.

I felt it come with power to my soul. O for a full devotedness to thee, my God ! I see I am quietly to wait on thee, though my crosses are very heavy in many ways. But *the will of the Lord be done* !

September 12.—This day thirty-eight years I was born. Solemn thought! O how far have I spent these thirty-eight years for God? What is my situation, outward and inward? Outward it is very trying; my circumstances are very perplexing. But I hold fast my former promises. "Christ charges himself with all thy temporal affairs, while you charge yourself with those that relate to his glory." I am determined to make Zion my chief care, though I know not what the Lord is about to do with me. I have a great family, and not an income left sufficient to keep them, which obliges me to sink something every year. The business hurts, instead of helping; and though Mr. *** is sure it will the next year do far otherwise, I cannot believe it. It appears to me deliverance will begin by bringing me out of this place, dividing the family, and contracting my wide-spread cares into one, viz., the cause of God only. But how this will be brought about I know not; for though I keep putting out the children as fast as they grow up, yet that is attended with much expense, and I have many grown persons whom I know not how to provide for, nor find any way to dispose of. They are good sincere souls, and they live to God. Some of them also are very weak in body, and advanced in years. When I have settled all the accounts, I am led to believe it will be the order of God for me to go down to Bath and Bristol for six months. Nine months ago I got a fall, which hath made me in a degree lame ever since. Bath may help that; but I believe I have something to do for souls in those places, and I shall be glad to be at a distance from poor Mr. ***. O how sad it is! I fear while he helps me, I hurt him. Lord! what a situation is mine!

But how is it with me inwardly? On the whole I have found my mind more stayed on God this last year, and my confidence in his loving protection is a good deal increased. That sore temptation of fear, by which I have suffered so much in going out in the work of God, I have found a good deal removed by prayer. I have had freedom, and some success, in dealing with souls. But I am not all athirst for full salvation. I do not feel that ardent desire after it which swallows up every other care and desire. I have yet some prospects on earth, which I cannot fully look over. They present themselves before me,

and I do not feel—deeply feel—the force of these words, “It is far better to depart, and be with Christ.” Again, many cares divide my soul. I know not if ever I shall get this place sold; or ever pay my debts. Every thing sinks me deeper in that respect. It is amazing what losses and trials I have! Yet I feel my anchor cast in the will of God. I fear, however, that I have departed from his close embrace, and therefore he hath encompassed my way with thorns. Well, I will, I do embrace his justice, as well as his mercy! Both “his rod and his staff shall comfort me!”

It is an easy matter to believe when all goes smoothly about us. But now is the time for my faith to have its full exercise. Nothing but ruin in temporal things seems before me, and I am upbraided by many as being a fool. They say, “Why does not she turn them all out of doors?” Nay, some who should know better, cast the same in my teeth! Yet with all my endeavours I see no way out. To turn them out of doors!—I have no light for that. Still I seem called to believe God will make a way for each, and remove them in his own time and manner. Still I trust that I shall see accomplished those words, so powerfully applied at Laytonstone: “Thou shalt lay up gold as the dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brook; yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.” What I understand by these words is, that a time shall come when I shall owe no one any thing, and have plenty to carry on such designs as the Lord shall lay on my heart for his glory. That he will bring me out of this place, and provide some way for every member to be removed, so that I shall say, Now is fulfilled that word, “Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee, and light shall shine on thy path.” But here is the difficulty; how absurd does it appear to go on with a great household, running me out on every side! How ridiculous will distress so brought on make me appear in the eyes of all! That thought has made me strive and struggle every way to throw it off, but it seems the Lord always frustrates my endeavours, and I am forced to sit down at his footstool again, with that thought, “My time is in his hand, and he knows how to deliver.” It is hard to believe against seeming impossibilities. Yet it comes

to my mind, God does bless me in believing spiritual things that are above my powers; but these are only temporal. Will he bless *that* exercise of faith? It is certain Abraham's faith was tried in temporal things—and through the temporal difficulties, he held fast faith in the spiritual. Israel was called into a temporal Canaan, prefiguring the spiritual;—and I cannot divide two ideas which continually seem to dwell together in my mind, viz., that I shall be delivered from all my spiritual enemies, and brought into a most perfect liberty of soul, as soon as I am delivered from the temporal; and that I shall first praise the Lord for the fulfilment of the above promises, and then for full salvation!

October 28.—Glory be to God, he is yet working among us! Last week Sally Lawrence was set at liberty, and the change is very evident. Yesterday as I was meeting her, she said, "O! had I known what the love of God was, sure I should never have rested so long without it! I have often found great joy, but there was always a sting in the end. Some thought or other would come and take away the pleasure; but now I find a pleasure in God without any sting. Last week I felt a change, and many promises; but I had not a clear evidence. Yet I thought, I do feel in many things as I never did before. However, as you were saying in the class last Tuesday, that we ought to *rejoice evermore*, and the way so to do was to praise the Lord for what he had done; I thought, then I will try to do so. Accordingly, I spoke more freely than I should otherwise have done, and while I spoke, I found more power to believe. But on Friday, while you were meeting the children, I found my evidence quite clear: these words were applied to my mind: 'There is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus.' And since that time I have been very happy. I never knew such a week as this in all my life. I used to be tired, and I hated the washing week; but I have now been kept in entire peace all through."

Bath, February, 1778.—On the 8th of December last, I set out for this place, and came here on the 12th. Much have I seen of the hand of my God here in many ways. Soon after my arrival, Mr. Wesley came to lay the first stone of the chapel. He preached from these words:

"From this time it shall be said, What hath God wrought?" He pointed out to us in what a wonderful manner the Lord had carried on his work in the three kingdoms, within these last thirty or forty years. It was a solemn time. The people were very attentive, though the cold was very severe. At night we had a lovefeast: I was led to speak with some degree of freedom. As I came out, several asked me where I lodged. I told them I should (with the Lord's help) be at home at such an hour every day. Several came to me, one after another, and the Lord's hand hath been with us of a truth. What amazing answers to prayer have I seen! Lord, give me *to endure to the end!* In the classes and bands, also, I find much freedom in speaking for God; and he gives me to cast all my own burden on himself, and to believe Christ charges himself with all my concerns, while he, in some low degree, gives me to charge myself with those that relate to his glory. Here are many souls who seem to thirst for spiritual conversation, as the traveller for the cooling stream; and whenever we are together, our Lord is in the midst.

March.—Conversing with a gentleman who knew something of my situation, he said, "If I had had such losses as you have had, and was in such an encumbered situation, I should stamp and tear, and go raving mad." I began to reflect on his words, and thought, How is it that I am kept so calm? I saw and adored the hand of my God, and was constrained to cry out, "Lord, thou hast known my soul in adversity!" This is thy doing, and I will praise thee.

April 4.—When I was in this city fourteen years ago, the Lord was pleased to give me some souls. I wondered often what was become of them; but glory be to God! I find them as simple and steady as ever;—and some are much advanced. I asked of the Lord at my first coming at this time, that some soul might be particularly blessed, that I might be encouraged to think that I was come in his name. A few days after we came, the answer was given. Brother Cousins was restored to the love of God. But this was only the beginning of good things. Each day opened the providence of God more and more. Several persons got good, and I saw my call quite clear. One old disciple gave me much pleasure. She had long been

a follower, and useful to others. The first time I saw her, she laid open her whole heart, and was simple as a little child. I scarce ever found so much of the power of God in conversing with any one as with her. Before we parted the Lord gave her a taste of the liberty she came to inquire after. She sent others—among whom was one young woman, an upright soul, but who had got into sore temptation, and lost her peace. The Healer of the breaches again appeared, and she was filled with consolation, and found (as she afterward told me) she was *a new creature*. A man and his wife the next day called on me; they had a measure of life; but they were come (as they said) to inquire when, and how, “the blood of Jesus would cleanse them from all sin.” Such simplicity I hardly ever met with before. My heart was ready to melt with desire. I found such access in addressing the throne of grace as I cannot express. It was all “ask and have!” I did ask, and, glory be to God, he granted my petition, and brought the dear souls into farther light and liberty!

April 24.—I am now at Bristol. Lord! what shall I meet with here? O let me be ever observant of thy will!

May.—I wrote and sent to my Wednesday nights’ meeting, (consisting of about fifty persons, who meet at Cross Hall,) the following letter:—

“Though various occupations in my Master’s work have rendered my pen for a longer time silent than I at first intended, I can assure you with a pleasing sincerity, my heart has often been warmed when pleading before the throne in your behalf. Very dear are all the followers of the Lord to me in every place;—but my little company on Wednesday nights will ever hold a peculiar place in my heart. I also include the spreading branch in Wakefield. May lively grace rest on you all!—and may you ever adorn your profession as a company of the choicest followers of the bleeding Lamb! Many here inquire, ‘How goes on your Wednesday nights’ meeting?’ There is a general belief of great life in Yorkshire. In this your fame is gone out into other Churches. O, how alarming the thought! ‘What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness! A city set on a hill cannot be hid.’ Either a ray of light, or a shade of darkness, will reflect from every professor.

Adorable Jesus, fill us with that jealous, just concern, that our light may never become darkness! In order to prevent this, let the most strict and ardent watchfulness keep your eye and heart for ever fixed on 'the Lamb who taketh away your sins!' For it is by these believing views that all the streams of consolation, wherewith our souls are replenished and refreshed, are given. I would have you praise the Lord for me, and therefore I tell you, I have, and do prove him to be a God of faithfulness and truth.

"The account of a Jewess in this city may perhaps help your strains of praise to rise a little higher. I will therefore give it you in the best manner my memory will afford.

"She was born in Germany. Her father was a famous Jew rabbi. He gave her a good education, and brought her up very strictly according to the laws of the Jews. When she was about eighteen she found a strong inclination to come to England. This her parents much opposed, as they could well provide for her, and could see no reason why she should leave her native country. But she had no rest in her spirit while in Germany; so at last they gave consent that she should visit their own people in England. They gave her a handsome sum of money, and sent her off with their blessing, in company with some friends. She continued to live some time in England, till at length she was cheated out of the greatest part of her money. She was then reduced to many hardships, and after a time went as a servant into a Jew's family. Her mistress liked her greatly, and used her as one of her own children. Here she thought her lot was cast in a fair portion, for she loved her mistress, and rejoiced to do her service. But after a short time a great change took place. Her mistress was awakened to a sense of the things of God, and in the end found 'there was no name under heaven whereby she could be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ.' This grieved the young woman beyond expression. She now hated her mistress, as much as before she had loved her; and very often her behaviour corresponded with the feelings of her heart. The arrows of conviction, however, now began to fasten on her also; and oft she reasoned with herself, saying,—

What a difference there is between my mistress and me! If I had such a servant I would turn her off at once. But my mistress seems all love since she believed in Jesus Christ as the Messiah; but I am all hatred. Besides, she is happy, always happy, while I am always miserable. Then again, she would start at the thought and say,—What! am I going to leave the true religion? O, no! I will never believe in Christ. I will pray to the true Messiah. Then she would go up to the top of the house, and (as she thought) looking toward Jerusalem, would cry, ‘O Lord Jehovah, hear me! Thou hast done great wonders for our people, and for our nation; and when we were in the hands of our enemies, thou didst send deliverance for thy chosen people Israel. O hear me! thou God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and send us our Messiah, that he may take away our misery! Then ‘shall kings be our nursing fathers, and queens our nursing mothers,’ and ‘we shall be restored again to our former privileges!’ It would then come to her mind, Jesus Christ, whom you despise, is the very and true Messiah! But that thought she thrust away with fear.

“One night she went to bed in great distress, and dreamed she was walking on a common, and that a man came up to her whom she knew to be Jesus Christ. She looked on him, and between hope and fear said, ‘Tell me, are you my Messiah?’ He answered, ‘I am your Messiah.’ Yet she drew back, and was afraid to believe. In the morning she knew not what to think. Wherever she went she seemed always to see Christ as hanging on the cross! And in her own soul felt so deeply the sentence of death, that she seemed to have no hope of salvation. At last she told the Lord, one day, she could almost believe, and if he would give some sign, she thought she should hold out no longer. The sign which God gave to Israel, through Samuel’s prayer, came strongly to her mind, as she waited before the Lord—her soul then struggling between faith and unbelief. It was at that time rather cold weather; but the Lord was pleased, before the close of the day, to send a storm of thunder and lightning, which terrified her beyond expression. While she was on her knees, expecting every moment to drop into hell, (which she now clearly felt she deserved,) she cried

to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to hear and save her! God did hear. Glory be to his free mercy, he made her to feel, 'None but Jesus could do helpless sinners good!' In the same moment she felt his blood applied, and shouted aloud the praises of her Messiah!

"From this time she continued happy in the love of God. She then became sensible of the stirrings of inbred sin, from which she had no thought of ever being delivered till she should lay down the body. I found much blessing in conversing with her; and after the first time she was much stirred up to seek a farther salvation. For some weeks she was tossed between hope and fear.—One day as I was meeting brother Sims's class, she seemed uncommonly oppressed with unbelief, yet she pleaded, 'O! can it be possible that I should be wholly delivered from anger, and live in a place where I have ten children to look after? I recommended her to look to Jesus, who could and would 'save her to the uttermost.' Several of us walked home together. As she was praying inwardly, and meditating on the all-sufficiency of the Saviour, sister Tripp said, 'God kept Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the fire, and why not you?' She answered nothing, but pondered the words in her heart. When she got home, she began to consider, He really did keep the three children in the furnace! And he can keep me from anger. As she strove to believe, her faith grew stronger and stronger, till she could cast the full weight of her soul on Jesus, as her uttermost Redeemer. O my friends, praise the Lord!"

Cross Hall, September 12.—This day I am thirty-nine years of age. O that I might live to Thee more than ever! What have I either done or suffered for thee, in this last year? As to the state of my soul, I trust I am nearer to God than before I went my journey. But I am still a dull scholar in thy school. I want that full baptism of the Spirit: God's promise to all believers. Mr. *** is very kind and helpful to me in the care of my temporal affairs; but what my trials are, none but God knows. To-day I was blessed in praying for him, with that word: "I will bless them that bless thee!" Amen! Amen!

Sunday, November 15.—This day I found a blessing in

putting in practice some resolutions I had formed for my daily walk. At seven we set out for Daw Green, where we had a good meeting. O what a desire did I feel for that people, while I was speaking on that word, "The Lord thy God is a jealous God!"

March 26, 1779.—This day I set apart as a fast, to lay before the Lord the following particulars: 1. My present situation. 2. To ask for wisdom how to walk before my family. 3. For more of his love. 4. For a blessing on my journey to ——. 5. For my relations. On the whole, it has been a good day. As to the first petition, my present situation, I found much power and liberty in believing God would undertake and appoint me some deliverance; yea, entire deliverance, in his own time and in his own way; and I had more faith, I think, than ever before; yet, it was mixed with sweet resignation. 2. How to walk with wisdom before my family. I felt a great pleading for this, and some encouragement that I should yet "adorn the Gospel." The third, For more love. I felt freedom in asking it. The fourth, For a blessing on the few days I am to spend at ——. I feel much of the cross in this adventure; yet, I think I must do it, and God will be with me. As to the fifth, I could find no particular opening, only a willingness to do, be, or suffer, any thing for their good. Perhaps the time has not yet come. The third time I went to prayer, all seemed swallowed up in that petition; Lord, give me "the love that never faileth."

Wednesday in Passion Week.—I have this day offered myself up afresh to the Lord, as a whole burnt sacrifice. O give me that situation, those friends, those comforts, or crosses, which will best stand with thy own glory! 'Tis all I ask—'tis all my choice.

May 21.—Lord, my thirsty soul crieth after thee; I long for a fuller deliverance. Last night I met the old members of the W. band, and a sweet time we had; the Lord was very gracious in helping his unworthy worm, and gave me, I believe, to speak to his glory. Since I returned from my journey to —, I have been much drawn out in praise. O how good was the Lord! He made hard things easy, and was better to me than either my fears or wishes. To-day, when at prayer, I had a sight of the necessity of contemplation; I mean, of labour-

ing to keep the mind on spiritual things, and to consider and weigh the word of God, his love, his fulness! "Love without end, and without measure, grace!"

August, 1780.—O Lord, how peculiar are thy ways toward me! What wouldst thou have me to do? Here I am; command what thou wilt. Bring me to a state of poverty, reproach, a workhouse, or what thou wilt, only let me not mistake my way. It is true I have more than I owe, and as yet an income for life, enough for myself. But I cannot support these expenses and losses. And yet it seems I cannot get deliverance from them! Every answer to prayer is only "Stand still and see my salvation." Lord, I am ready to do so; but all cry out, "It is madness not to do something." And yet thou seemest to frustrate all I attempt. I strive to save in every thing, and many ways I have tried to do so; but unless all did the same, it makes little difference. When I attempt new things of the kind, various difficulties arise; and some are apt to say, "Save in something else; you do not run out in this!"

The other day a friend said he was desired to ask me, "If I did not do wrong in spending so much time on the sick poor? In making medicines, clothes," &c.? And **** said, "It is a poor way of spending your time thus, for the bodies of the people. If that is your call, it is a mean call!" I have pondered the thought; and having set apart a day for fasting and prayer, the result of my most serious reflections were as follows:—

What was my setting out, or first light? Why, from seven years old, (the first time I felt a spark of faith,) my conviction was,—not to be conformed to the customs, fashions, and maxims of the world; and my frequent prayer was, as a little manuscript now by me proves, Lord, bring me out from among the ungodly! Cast my lot with *the poor who are rich in faith*; and make me to have my delight with *the excellent of the earth*. And then I will not complain for toil, poverty, or reproach.

When I was seventeen, my desires after holiness began to deepen, and I found a particular call to a farther dedication of my soul to God, in those words of St. Paul to Timothy, descriptive of the character of those women, who in the primitive Church were chosen as deaconesses,

"If she have lodged strangers, if she have brought up children, if she have washed the saints' feet, and diligently followed after every good work." When I was twenty-one, being brought to the choice of my own manner of life, I was enabled in a degree to follow the plans thus formerly laid down.

As to my present way of life, of which a visiter had said a few days ago, "I think, madam, your call is a strange one,—to the care of cows and horses, sheep and pigs;"—referring to my farm,—I considered, I am by the order of Providence made mistress of a great family, and in straitened circumstances. There is therefore occasion for all my care and management, otherwise the embarrassment would be much greater. And it is good for the uncommon pride of my nature to bow before that word, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." It is true, I have bread enough for myself; but having joined the interests of so many with my own, I am willing to act thus, that they may have bread too. The Lord hath been pleased, also, to enable me to help the sick: this calls for some labour, and some small expenses in preparing and applying the medicines: but many souls have been blessed, and several brought to God thereby. Some rich persons, to whose ear I could never have had access, have, through the belief that I could help their bodies, admitted the closest application to their souls; so that I dare as soon cut off my right hand as bury this trifling talent in a napkin. The souls under my roof also call for more diligent care than I am conscious I bestow upon them; and though some say, "I do not regard as any thing what you do for the family, that is only burying yourself in one house;" yet I see it my duty, and I must apply thereto.

Again, I believe I should strive to get at the neighbours who live within my knowledge, and do good to their souls, if I can. To this it is replied, "You spend too much time on one neighbourhood." But perhaps I shall soon be called to leave this neighbourhood, and this family, and then I shall not repent of that application. I am also called to keep together some precious meetings, in which the work of God flourishes, and to go sometimes to meet others in more distant places; as well as to write many

letters on the concerns of the soul. And now I ask,—Lord, am I in my place or not? To which it seemed my conscience gave the following answer :—The surest mark of true piety is to fill up the duties of our own station with the utmost fidelity. We may plan fine schemes, talk of many journeys, and see ourselves converting whole worlds, but in these airy phantoms there is much danger of self having a great mixture. Whereas in the application to the order of God, in the present time, as it opens itself from moment to moment, there is no room for choice. I have heard good people say, “I am weary of life, because of the burdens which I have to bear. I want to spend all my time in a more excellent way.” And yet as soon as they throw off one burden, the Lord finds them another. But the soul truly devoted to God finds no oppressive burden in the opening of the present moment, which shows the Divine order of his providence, and brings with it, to the resigned soul, both light and power either to act or suffer. In a low degree I find that to be my case. I am called to work ; and therein I fulfil my covenant not to complain of toil, although my wages seem to be put into a *bag full of holes*. I cannot have my own choice herein ; nor do I complain of poverty. Thus I am often upbraided for walking in that order, in which (till I can get out of it) undoubtedly the Lord has placed me. I sink under his yoke, and if I can but keep free from impatience or discouragement, I may fulfil his will, and shall not complain of reproach. But, alas ! I do too often admit discouragement, and am ready to cry out,

“Ah! whither or to whom shall I,
Far from these woes, for kind protection fly?”

Yet something says in my heart, a time is at hand when the Lord will bring me out of these deep waters,—and I am determined to *stand still and see his salvation*.

November.—Last night I was led to pray much for a spiritual mind, both sleeping and waking. I went to bed recollected. I dreamed I was sitting up in bed with the Bible in my hand. I saw two shining appearances, but no distinct form. The appearance was as the heads of two glorious persons, and a ray of light came from them on the book in my hand, in which I was enabled to discover something which quite delighted me, and I cried

out,—O had I known this before, I should have made the whole house ring with shouts of praise! I then saw all around my bed a beautiful garden filled with evergreens, and on each tree, and on the ground, lay something like a light frost. I wondered at that, till these words came to my mind, “The dew shall lie all night upon thy branches!” I then cried out, O what a delightful scene! What a lovely prospect! Here shall I for ever rest! I then threw my soul with such a Divine confidence on the Lord Jesus, as I think I never did before, and in that act I awaked. I could not recollect what the delightful discovery in the Bible was; but a fuller sense of God than ever before has rested on my soul.

January 11, 1781.—Many mercies have I seen within these three or four days. Nothing is so good to me, as to meet every thing in the will and order of God; abandoning myself, soul, body, and family, into his hands, believing he will order all right. I find many convictions about my household. I am not a faithful head. I neither lead them by example, instruction, or reproof, as I ought. Lord, teach me how to go in and out before this people! I seem to have an impression that I shall not long remain with them. I seem to see another place, and another people, which I am called to; and outward things confirm the impression. One thing I have been very faulty in during the last year, I have not risen early with any degree of constancy; and that is a general loss both to my own soul and my family. O Lord! when shall I be “all glorious within, and my clothing of wrought gold?”

January 13.—I have been to-day a good deal drawn out in prayer. My exercises as to outward things are very great. I have a most narrow path to walk in! I am called to live by faith indeed. As I was at prayer this morning, I was led to ask of the Lord that he would bring me out of all my difficulties in his own way. Certainly the whole earth is the Lord’s; and I asked of him such a situation in life as will most glorify himself. It was brought before me, Perhaps that will be by bringing you to entire poverty. I asked my heart, Am I willing on that condition to be made holy? And I felt I could say, “Yes, Lord, yes.” Again, the thought was suggested, But perhaps to a parish house, while your income goes

each year for your debts? I answered, *Thy will be done!* It was then represented, as if I was on a common side, dying, destitute of every human help or comfort. In that I felt great sweetness. But the sorest stroke was still behind: What if you should die in debt, and leave nothing to pay? and so through you the Gospel be reproached? This came the nearest of all; but it was clearly shown me, that the fear of the Gospel being blamed, often arose from our fear of personal reproach; for as to the truths of God, he would take care of them; and if I was really wrong, it would be for the glory of God to have it made manifest; and if he was but glorified, my soul was content. Certainly, thought I, if it was in my power to break off my expenses, it would be right so to do; and I do right in contriving every way I can toward it. But as all my endeavours are always frustrated, I see no way but to cast myself on the will of God, and embrace, as his will, poverty, and deep reproach; and still continue to believe in the promises till I see, even by the time of my death, that there has not been an accomplishment of them. Perhaps after all I am right. Perhaps the day will come (impossible as it now appears) when *I shall have plenty of silver*, and then the light shall indeed shine on my way.

Next June I shall be fourteen years from Laytonstone; and the September following I shall be forty-two years old. It may be that soon after that time deliverance may appear. The words rested on my mind, "By the way that thou wentest, by that way shalt thou return." Lord, thou knowest what they mean; but I see all sorts of crucifixions are needful for me. O my hard heart! what need hath it had of breaking!

February 15.—When I was at Leeds some time since, I had much proof of the goodness of God in many ways. On the whole it was a journey for good. I heard a dream of a good woman while there, which was made a blessing to me. She thought she was dying, and felt her soul leave the body. Immediately she found herself standing in the presence of God! Jesus appeared to her as seated on a white throne! He beckoned to her with his hand, and said, Come up hither. When she was by his side, she saw many of the saints with the angels. Among

them was William Bramah; he shone very bright. Some others she knew also. Our Lord then pointed to the crowns of some saints still on earth, and she understood, by the appearance of some of those crowns, that the persons were in great temptation. Our Lord and the glorious company seemed to sympathize greatly with them, and when by faith they conquered, a jewel was added to the crown, and the whole shone brighter! But every time they gave way to any corruption, a gem dropped out, and the whole crown turned dark! Sometimes there seemed joy in heaven over them; sometimes a kind of mourning. She sat some time in sweet delight, and then awaking, found with amazement she was still in the body!

I am going to —. It is a fine opportunity for speaking to a number of the most lively souls, out of various societies, and they begin to inquire all around when I will come. O my God, how these things break me to pieces! What an unworthy worm! If they knew me, how would they be astonished that the Lord should work by such a one as I! But thou canst do whatever seemeth thee good!

March 20.—I have been poorly lately with a complaint in my eyes; I can write a little. The cold this winter has been very severe, and I have felt it much. But O how am I indulged! A good house, a bed fit for a king, plenty of fire, food, &c.! while many of my Father's children know almost the want of all things! I was much affected the other day when the preacher left our house. I thought, if I had in this snow and wind to ride over the moors, and through deep lanes, as he has, I could not sit on my horse. Truly I count it a great honour to be permitted to contribute in the least to their necessities! O let me ever *wash the feet of the servants of my Lord*!

I feel my soul does come forward. Constancy in early rising is a great blessing to me, both as a Christian, and as a mistress. The other morning I was waked with that word, "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promises." At night, as I was at prayer, that word also came with power, "Thou hast kept the word of my patience; I also will keep thee in the hour of temptation!" Amen, Lord Jesus, Amen! Give me to "keep the word of thy patience faithful unto the end!"

April.—My soul, wait thou still upon God, for of him cometh thy salvation. More crosses, more disappointments ; but last night I had a ray of faith which revived me. I have of late had a very clear view of the absolute necessity of keeping the mind always stayed on God, from those words : “ Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Indeed he is a chained dog, and can go no farther than man’s consent will suffer him. His works are chiefly carried on in the chambers of the imagination. These are indeed *the chambers of imagery* ! He fixes his first hold in the imagination, which is the antechamber of the heart. Afterward he passes on to the passions and affections. These form the passage through which all passes to the heart, both good and evil. If the mind then is engrossed by Satan, and he be suffered to rule there, the benign influence of the Holy Spirit is prevented, and the soul is filled with all evil. Thus, “ To be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace ! ”

April 25.—I have had some remarkable answers to prayer of late, and some directions by lot, which I shall lay up in my heart till I see *the way of the Lord*. O my God, give me just such a situation in every respect as will be most for thy glory ! Many blessings also I have of late received in visiting the sick, and strength has been given me above that which is common. I long for a closer walk with my God ! O that I may live to God every moment, with every power !

May 6, Sunday.—I had liberty this day to entreat the Lord, to show me the surest and shortest way to holiness. Many things were showed me, which I hope to put in practice ; but above all, it was impressed on my mind, *Live by faith*.

PART THE FOURTH.

HER MARRIAGE, AND REMOVAL TO MADELEY.

THE seventh of June, 1781, as I before observed, was the day that began my fourteenth year in Yorkshire. On that day I took a particular view of my whole situation, and saw difficulties as mountains rise all around me. Faith was hard put to it. The promise seemed to stand sure, and I thought the season was come, yet the waters were deeper than ever. I thought also, how shall I now hold fast that word so powerfully given to me, "The Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver?"

At length "the cloud arose as a man's hand." The very next day, June the eighth, I received a letter from Mr. Fletcher, in which he told me—That he had for twenty-five years found a regard for me, which was still as sincere as ever; and though it might appear odd he should write on such a subject, when but just returned from abroad, and more so without seeing me first, he could only say, that his mind was so strongly drawn to do it, he believed it to be the order of Providence.

In reading this letter I was much struck;—so many circumstances all uniting. 1. The season it came in. 2. His writing on the subject before we had met, after an absence of fifteen years; and without his having the most distant suspicion of my mind being inclined toward it. 3. His mentioning, that for twenty-five years he had had the thought. All these particulars answered to the marks which I had laid down. His unexpected recovery, also, and safe return, so plainly pointed out the hand of Providence, that all ground of reasoning against it seemed removed. Yet, on the other hand, a strange fear possessed my mind lest I should take any step out of the order of God;—nor was Satan wanting to represent great trials before me, which he told me I should not have strength to stand in.

We corresponded with openness and freedom, till August the first, when he came to Cross Hall, and abode

there a month, preaching in different places with much power :—and having opened our whole hearts to each other, both on temporals and spirituals, we believed it to be the order of God we should become one, when he should make our way plain.

He then returned to his parish, a hundred and twelve miles from the place where I lived ; for we could not think of taking the step till my affairs were more clearly settled. So we took our leave of each other, committing all into His hands who “ does what he will with his own.”

In about five weeks he returned ; but still all seemed shut up ; no way opened either for disposing of the farm, or of the family. Conversing one day with Mrs. Clapham, of Leeds, she said, “ What do you stick at ? The Lord has done so much to convince you that this is to be your deliverance, how is it that you do not believe, and obey his order ? I verily believe if you would take the step in faith, your way would be made plain directly ; and I will now tell you what has passed my mind concerning it. When I was some months since at Scarborough, as I was one day in private, praying for you, and much drawn out in laying your trials before the Lord, I was as if taken out of myself, and saw by the eye of faith both Mr. Fletcher and you, and that you were designed for each other, and that much glory to God would arise from your union. But at the same time I saw that there were various obstacles in the way ;—but the chief was the want of money. It seemed to me, however, if you would believe and obey the order of God, all would be made clear before you. Then I saw a tall young man, (it seemed to me it was your youngest brother,) who poured down bags of gold, not once only, or twice, but several times. Some were small, others seemed large sums ; one was very large ; and it was impressed on my mind that all your trials of that kind were over, and that you would never experience those difficulties any more.”* She then asked, “ Have

* This whole account is certainly very extraordinary. No pious person, however, will say that the Lord has not helped, or would not thus direct or comfort his servants, in peculiar difficulties ; and no person, who was acquainted with Mrs. Clapham, will doubt either the truth of her declaration, or the sobriety of her mind.—
Ed.

you more brothers than one?" I replied, Yes, I have two, and the youngest is tall; but I never received any thing in particular from him, nor have I the least reason to expect it. Her discourse, however, with several concurring circumstances, made an impression on our minds; and after asking direction from the Lord, we agreed to take the step in a fortnight.

For the first week all remained as usual; but in the beginning of the second, a gentleman came quite unexpectedly, and bought the place, for one thousand six hundred and twenty pounds. Three days after, another took the stock, &c. A way seemed also to open for each member of the family; so that with a little assistance, every one had a comfortable prospect before them. The case of one, a poor cripple, who had lived with me sixteen years, seemed difficult. Though she feared and loved God, she had such infirmities no one was willing to take her; and we had some reasons against taking her with us to Madeley. But this difficulty also was removed. On Sunday night, November the 11th, I received a letter from a pious lady, who had first recommended her to me, stating that she would take her back and maintain her.

All was now so far settled, that I did not need to sell Laytonstone estate. My income would afford to allow the pious souls of my dispersed family fifty-five pounds per year; pay the interest of the money still owing; and yet leave me such an annual sum as was about equal to my dear Mr. Fletcher's income; and in case of my death, there was in Laytonstone more than would pay all.

So on Monday, the 12th of November, 1781, in Batley church, we covenanted in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, "to bear each other's burdens," and to become one for ever.

We agreed it would be best to leave all our furniture, except a few trifles, to be sold with the house. Pine would do for us as well as mahogany. I felt some attachment to my neat furniture; but love to the order of God made me take the spoiling of them very cheerfully. The money was not to be paid in immediately for the estate; we were, therefore, rather at a loss to settle all our accounts before we left the place, and to give that assistance to our friends we wished to do. On an exact calculation, we found a

hundred pounds were wanting. We laid it before the Lord; and the next post I received a letter from my youngest brother, with a bank note of one hundred pounds enclosed, as a present;—though he knew nothing of our particular want, nor had I the least reason to expect his assistance, except the extraordinary communication by Mrs. Clapham, which I have related.

On January 2, 1782, we set out for Madeley. But O! where shall I begin my song of praise? What a turn is there in all my affairs! What a depth of sorrow, distress, and perplexity, am I delivered from! How shall I find language to express the goodness of the Lord! Not one of the good things hath failed me of all the Lord my God hath spoken. Now I know no want, but that of more grace. I have such a husband as is in every thing suited to me. He bears with all my faults and failings in a manner that continually reminds me of that word, "Love your wives as Christ loved the Church." His constant endeavour is to make me happy; his strongest desire my spiritual growth. He is, in every sense of the word, the man my highest reason chooses to obey. I am also happy in a servant, whom I took from the side of her mother's coffin, when she was four years old. She loves us as if we were her parents, and is also truly devoted to God.

Madeley, Shropshire, May 30, 1782.—Where shall I begin, or how recount thy faithfulness, O my God! O! "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" Above all, what am I, most sinful dust and ashes, that thou hast made my cup to run over above all I could think or wish for! O for holiness! Lord, let me be thine, and doubly thine for ever!

O the fears which filled my soul before and after our marriage! but how causeless have they all proved! I have the kindest and tenderest of husbands; so spiritual a man, and so spiritual a union, I never had any adequate conception of. He is every way suited to me, all I could wish.* The work among souls increases. I feel it is the Lord

* Mr. Wesley observes in a letter to the late Mrs. Rogers, at that time (December 9, 1781) Miss Roe, "I should not have been willing that Miss Bosanquet should have been joined to any other person than Mr. Fletcher; but I trust she may be as useful with him as she was before."—See his Works, vol. vii.

who hath cast my lot here. For some months I suffered much through fears of various kinds; all my situation being changed, I feared I should not be equal to the task allotted me, and that I should not be able to please the people "for their good." But O! had I in every trial but believed all the way through, how sweetly might I have gone on! Now I see what a gracious Providence hath superintended all! "Praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise his holy name!"

June 7.—What a deliverance hath the Lord wrought for me! A year ago, I thought there was nothing before me (temporarily) but ruin. This day twelve months, I cried out, "Thou hast not delivered thy people at all." How wonderful a chain of providences! As soon as we determined to marry in a fortnight, and leave the event to the Lord, the house and all was sold in ten days, and a way made for every one! But wanting a hundred pounds more to get out of that situation, we prayed the Lord to appear in our behalf, and immediately my youngest brother supplied our every need, though he knew not any thing of our necessity.

"In all my ways thy hand I own!
Thy ruling providence I see."

September 12.—I have seen forty-three years! Lord, to what purpose! Most of this day I have spent in secret prayer; yet my soul is rather sorrowful. I have a variety of people and different calls of God to attend unto; and I seem to want more wisdom, light, and love. My spiritual sphere of action is different. I have in many respects a wider call for action than before; but such a one as requires the momentary teaching of the Lord, both in conversing and writing. Yet I do not feel all that I felt at Hoxton. No, I do not so live by faith as I did then. But I lie before thee, O Lord! Do all thy will on thy poor creature, for whom thou hast appeared in so marvellous a manner!

October.—The animating example of my dear husband stirs me up much. What a spiritual life does he live—night and day he is always on the stretch for God. I am a good deal encouraged for the people. I have much liberty in meeting them, and my soul feels sweet fellowship with some among them.

November 1.—I feel the care which a new place, and a new situation, is apt to bring on, and it disturbs the peace which should be kept in my soul. “Lord, increase my faith!” There are many peculiar circumstances in our affairs, and strangers are concerned therein; but in the end I have found it all work for good; it has been to me a good and useful lesson. First, I find it a cause of rejoicing that I have found so much love to the persons concerned in it; and secondly, while I was praying about it, it seemed as if the Lord showed me, as immediately from himself, that I was not required to have any anxious care, but that doing as well as I could, I might leave all to God. And if still I could not have things as I would wish, that it was the most profitable cross in the world; for it may be helpful to the soul, after doing all we can, to appear a fool in the eyes of men. Those words also bore much on my mind:—

“Fix on his work thy constant eye,
So shall thy work be done.”

I now felt a sweet calm waiting on the will of God, and I could say, Lord, I leave every thing to thee! “One only care my soul shall know!” As I was telling the whole affair to my dearest husband, he said, “Polly, do not encumber yourself for my sake. If we must be thought ignorant and awkward, let us submit to it. I require nothing of thee, my Polly, but to be more and more devoted to God.”

November 12.—Glory! unceasing glory to my adorable Lord! This day we have been married one year. O how does my soul praise God for his gracious providence! What a helpmate is he to me, and how much better do we love one another this day, than we did this day twelve months! On a close examination, I have reason to believe my soul is coming forward. I have seen this year many and great changes, had many trials and many comforts, and I have learned much experience in various things, which has been much blessed to me. O for the moment when I shall become a whole burnt sacrifice!

Having had some hurry by means of unexpected company staying in the house, and some other things, and reflecting how hard it is to keep up uninterrupted com-

munion with God in outward hurry, it was opened before me, that the very spirit of the Christian life stood in the strictest observations of these words : "If a man offend not in tongue, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Now, for want of this watchfulness, I offend often, and that causes distraction of spirit, and much hurt many ways. If I had a more constant waiting, a more continual attention to the Spirit of God, I believe I should find much more room for silence than I usually do ; and that when it was my duty to speak, my words would have more weight. O my God, bring me to this by the way that thou knowest ; give me a watchful mind ! An eye always fixed on thee, and a far deeper sense of thy sacred presence ! I also want a greater power of faith to lead on these precious souls that are under my care to more abundant life. Many are now just on the river's brink, but it seems they want a better helper to assist in bringing them over.

May 21, 1783.—This day has been a day of trial. In the morning as I walked out about six o'clock, Mr. * * * 's letter of last night came with pain to my mind. I do not like the good that is in my dearest Mr. Fletcher to be evil spoken of. Before dinner I strove to get near to God, but having been up most of last night, I was very heavy. In the afternoon I could do but little, but I strove to pray. That passage in Mr. Wesley's Notes on the First Epistle of St. John, was much blessed, and very sweet to me. "Love is the beginning of eternal life. The same in substance with glory." Also St. John's words, "He that abideth in him sinneth not." I saw love comprised all in itself. For two hours I was led to lie before the Lord, though with many distractions, yet mingled with faith and longing desire. O when wilt thou take up in me thine everlasting abode !

May 22.—I have this day been engaged in company, and sweetly met the order of God therein. I was enabled to be watchful ; and blessed be God, my tongue has been kept. We took sweet counsel together, and I felt the Lord was the director of all within and without.

August 5.—Since the above, (May 22,) what have I seen of the goodness of the Lord ! A fever has been in the parish, which took off many whom we saw it our duty

to attend. It brought eternity very near, and that always does me good. It came into our family; and Sally was attacked with it. But my gracious God supported me under all burdens, and raised her up again in a wonderful manner. Soon after her recovery, Dr. Coke came in his way from Dublin. When I heard he was below, I felt an unusual spring of pleasure, with something of a conviction that he brought a message from the Lord. I instantly felt a spirit of submission, and as it were a listening to the will of God. So I have often felt when some conviction of fresh duty was about to be made plain to me. A few days before this, as I was one morning at prayer, I thought of one of our neighbours, (a speaker among the Friends,) who was gone to Ireland. It was suggested, Should I be called thither, could I resolve to go? It really seemed I could not. The sea, to me ever terrible, appeared then doubly so, and I groaned under the thought,—where is faith and resignation?

When we came into the parlour, we found the doctor had brought some letters from Dublin to each of us, by which it seemed the cloud moved that way. We said but little then, but went to church, where the doctor preached. Before we came out, my soul was all readiness to go to the world's end, if my adorable Lord so ordered it.

When we came home, I followed my dear to his study, and told him if he saw it his call to go, I saw it mine to follow him. He tenderly objected my health, as I had been very poorly some time, and in such a state of relaxation, that I waked for several mornings with blood in my mouth; but I believed that was not to hinder. Since that day we have been preparing for our journey; and I have enjoyed some communion with God in so doing. Satan is not wanting to suggest every thought that can raise fear. One day I was thinking, what would save me from all painful fear. If the Lord was to give me a promise of our safe return, that my dear husband's health should not be hurt, and that we should have much success when there, would that do? I hesitated, and my confidence seemed to be shook by temptation. I then thought, What will enable me to drink this cup to the glory of my Lord? My heart presently answered, Nothing but an entire re-

signation ; a losing of my whole will in that of my Lord's, and here I instantly found I was on a solid rock.

The trial is not come single. My dear husband's health is not very good. What the Lord will do with us I know not. We are, however, ready for setting off. I feel my heart much enlarged, and my spirit so willing to do and suffer the whole will of God, that it amazes me. When I think of my dear husband's life or health being in danger, I am not anxious as I used to be, but can rest in the love and wisdom of my unchangeable Friend. For this I praise him, because no words can express the treasure I possess in our union. It is such as I had no idea was to be enjoyed in a married state ; and in proportion as I get nearer to God, I find a daily increase of that union, and yet I am enabled so to give him up to the Lord, that it holds my soul in a quiet dependence and sweet adherence to the will of God.

William-street, Dublin, September 12.—This day of our birth calls for solemn praise. I say *our* birth, because, as far as we can learn, my dear Mr. Fletcher was born on the same day ten years before me. And why were we ever brought into being ? Here is the comfortable answer : " I have created thee for my glory : I have formed thee for my praise ! " O let us answer that design for ever !

Many were my conflicts before we set out for this place. At one time it was represented to me, that when we were on the watery element, the prince of the power of the air would exert all his efforts against us. As the thought presented, in a moment those words sprang up in my heart :—

" We shall be safe, for Christ displays
Superior power and guardian grace."

The Lord gave me to see the whole universe so under his command, as I cannot express. I saw him as " holding the winds in his fist," and " the waters in the hollow of his hand." And that sooner all nature should change, than one of God's promises fail. I am naturally inexpressibly fearful, with all sorts of fear, beyond what words can paint ; and it was often represented, if I went among strangers, I should, by that weakness, bring much discouragement on the feeble ones of the flock. But the

instance of Gideon was brought before me, and I was made to feel the Lord can get himself glory by the weakest worm; and my heart answered, O will Divine, which I adore and love! what a rest there is to be found in thee!

Well, in this will, with the prayers and blessing of many of our friends, on August the 12th we set off. As we drove from our own door, and my dear was commending us to the protection of the Lord, that word rested on my mind with power, *I am thy shield*. When we passed the Birches, (where a few years ago that remarkable phenomenon occurred,) Mr. Fletcher pointed out to me the roads and fields which were so lately covered with the river. We could not but be much amazed at the stupidity of the human heart. Most of the inhabitants seem almost to have forgotten the whole transaction! and we were led to observe how vain is the common objection to the miracles of our Lord, or to the sun standing still at Joshua's word, that they are not recorded in common history. Ah no! That which does not take hold on the sinful affections is soon lost and forgotten! While we were conversing on the above subject, we passed the Eaton Constadine, a little village rendered famous by the birth of that great servant of God, Mr. Baxter, with whose spirit we joined our feeble act of worship before the throne.

At night we were affectionately received by Mrs. Glynnne, of Shrewsbury, whose love to the children of God does not grow cold. May He who hath promised the prophet's reward, repay her in time and eternity. While my dear was preaching that night, on the danger of being *ashamed of the Gospel*, my heart yearned toward the people of that place, and the cry of my spirit was, "O that these people might live before thee." The next morning we pursued our journey as far as Llangollen, in Wales; but all the horses being out, we were constrained to abide there all night. Inquiring (as we walked about the town) whether they had any praying people among them, the poor things answered us in the best manner they could; and after consulting together, they said, "Yes, sir, there are some people who pray in houses at the other end of the town, but we do not know what they be." Another said, "This very night there is a man to

preach in the chapel belonging to these praying people." According to their direction we went to the place, and found a few poor people gathered in a building, I believe part of an old house. The preacher seemed very earnest and lively; I say seemed, for we could not understand one word, except gogoniant and gwaed, glory and blood; which, with much emphasis, he often repeated. After we were returned to our inn, the few who could understand English came to us, and desired my dear to give them a sermon in the morning, which he did on these words: "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he hath given us commandment." It was a good time, and several were present who understood English. We then set off for Conway, and Friday afternoon reached Holyhead. Here, for some reasons, I wished to stop a little, and inquiring when a vessel would sail, we were informed not till next morning. Mr. Fletcher was but poorly. A swelling which he had on his face now broke, and gave him much inconvenience; but on Saturday morning, we were informed that the packet was going off. Some of the people said, "The wind is quite contrary, you will have but a disagreeable passage;" but believing it to be the order of God we embarked. Now I remembered how the Lord had shown me, "He measureth the waters in the hollow of his hand." The wind soon grew more favourable, and the sea so smooth, that it seemed to me as if I heard him say, *Peace, be still!* Mr. Fletcher was not much affected by the sea, but I was very ill. About one o'clock on Sunday morning we cast anchor three miles from Dublin. We then got into a boat, which was rather troublesome, as the tide kept it in continual agitation; but through the goodness of the Lord we arrived safe. After being hindered for some time by the custom house officers, we reached by five in the morning the hotel on Dublin quay.

We now abide with our hospitable friends, Mr. and Mrs. Smyth, in William-street, and have seen much of the Lord's hand in bringing us hither. My dear husband has been favoured with such an unction in preaching the word, that it distils "as the dew on the mown grass." The present preachers in Dublin, brothers Rutherford and

Jackson, are truly simple, pious men, and respect that command, "In honour preferring one another." They heartily rejoice in the message my dear husband delivers among them. There are some spirits in this place in whom we find a degree of the primitive simplicity, rejoicing to see a stranger whom they believe the Lord has sent to be "a helper of their joy."

I feel a faith riveted in my heart that before it is long there will be a great revival of the work of God in Dublin. I feel much liberty in meeting the classes. Here are a few souls truly athirst for full salvation, and many who inquire after the most excellent way. Our kind and generous host and hostess allow us all freedom in their house, for the glory of God, and the good of his people; and as their servants also are pious upright persons, we can here worship with them in calm and brotherly love.

Madeley, October 30.—How much of thy goodness, O my God! have I seen since I last wrote! On the seventh of this month we left Dublin, and embarked in a Liverpool brig, bound for Holyhead. We had a long way to go in the boat, and about eight at night entered the vessel. The sea was then pretty smooth; but in the night the wind grew high, and the captain thought the sea more swelling than he had seen it for some years. It was what they call very squally; and we were extremely sick, far worse than in going. Those words, given me before I left home, were much on my mind:—

"And shall he not have
The life which he gave,
So precious a ransom for ever to save?"

And also, "Though I remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, there shall his hand guide me, and his right hand shall hold me." I could not tell whether they were not a call to sacrifice our lives to Him who had sacrificed his for us: but I lay still before the Lord, in the spirit of resignation, saying, "Thy will be done."

In going over, my dear husband's tender attention was a great alleviation to my suffering, but now we were both so ill (as was also Sally) we could scarce speak or look toward each other, but only wait before the Lord, that all his will might be done. Toward morning, the pump told us the vessel was leaky, but it was in a small degree, and

we were near land. It served to remind us of that word, "There is but a step between me and death!"

Since our return I have closely examined what I have lost or got in these last three months. I exceedingly praise the Lord that ever we went to Dublin, and that for various reasons. There are some souls there with whom my spirit found much fellowship; at whose feet I sat, and, I trust, learned many useful lessons. My dear Mr. Fletcher preached in several places beside the preaching house in Whitefriars-street, both to the French and English, and we had some remarkable proofs that he was called there of God.* I have also learned more of my

* Having visited Dublin soon after the departure of these servants of God, I can add my testimony to the great and good effects which resulted from their visit, and their truly evangelical labours. Never did I see such deep impressions made on the minds of that people, except, perhaps, in the very short visits of Mr. Wesley. But he had the care of all the Churches, and was occupied with that care in every place. Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher had a liberty in that respect which our father in the Gospel could not have. They were the unencumbered helpers of the people's joy; and it was truly the joy of the Lord. Those Divine impressions were deep and abiding; and, as Mrs. Fletcher hoped, a great revival of pure religion followed in that society. It had usually consisted of about 500 persons, but it soon increased to upward of 1,000, and has never since fallen below that number. Such longing after entire conformity to the Son of God, I never beheld! It seemed to be the general sentiment of all, from the highest to the lowest of the people. How wide this sacred influence might have extended, who can tell, if a poor sectarian spirit had not limited the labours of the man of God. On their arrival at Dublin, their host, Mr. Smyth, a distinguished and most respectable gentleman, applied to the rector of St. Andrew's parish (in which he lived) for Mr. Fletcher to preach in his church, and as he was a beneficed minister, it was immediately granted. The church (*commonly called the Round Church*) was crowded to excess. Mr. Fletcher's text was, *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*, Acts xxvi, 28. He showed what it was to be a Christian, from the liturgy which had just been read; beginning with the general confession, and the authoritative declaration of pardon to those "who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel;" and going on to that "cleansing of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord." He then proceeded to persuade them, with an earnestness and power that astonished the congregation, some of whom seemed to doubt if he were not more than human. But, alas! It was soon known that Mr. Fletcher preached that same evening at the Methodist preaching house! The pulpits of the churches were immediately shut against him,

own weakness and ignorance. I know not I ever found a more humbling season than while I was there. My continual prayer was, Ah! Lord, break me in pieces! Melt me down and let me flow, and more fully take the mould Divine! My soul is deeply convinced of the need of being filled with "all the fruit of the Spirit," or I shall never bring glory to my God. O that thou wouldst accomplish all thy will upon me!

Since our return, my dear husband has taken another journey of about two hundred miles, from which he has a good deal suffered. His face is not yet well. But the unwearied patience and resignation wherewith he goes through all, is to me a continual lesson, which I wish to imitate.

November 12.—And do we see the anniversary of our blessed union yet another year? And are we yet more happy and more tender toward each other? Yes, glory be to God! we are; and what is better, I can truly say, our souls get nearer to God. We are more spiritual, and live more for eternity. What have we passed through together since this day twelvemonth! What a tender kind friend hath he proved himself to me in every circumstance of each situation! And now Providence hath so graciously brought us again to our own country, and quiet habitation. O that we may live to him more than ever.

Yesterday I was much blessed in offering up my whole self, with all my concerns, into the hand of God, believing he would appoint me all my work, and all my crosses. He showed me he would make his will known to me through that of my dear husband, and that I was to accept his directions as from God, and obey him as the Church does Christ. That I must give myself to his guidance as a child, and wherever we were called, or however employed

with the exception of the French church. The first time he preached there, his text was, *Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions*, Hebrews x, 32. He thus brought before them the faith of their ancestors, and the persecutions that had driven them from their native land, and strongly enforced the inquiry, *Do ye now believe?* When some of the people were asked, "Why did you go to the French church to hear Mr. Fletcher, when you could not understand one word he said?" They answered, "We went to look at him, for heaven seemed to beam from his countenance!"—Ed.

in the work of God, I should always find protection, and glorify God, while I renounced all choice by doing the will of another rather than my own. This, indeed, I have always seen; but it was now more deeply impressed on my heart, as I was assured there was no danger in doing so, having his guidance. I saw how often, through that unaccountable fear which presses down my spirit, I have been afraid to follow in the ways he hath pointed out, and so have hindered the order of God. Lord, from this day I covenant afresh to be in this particular at thy own disposal!

February 3, 1784.—This day my convictions have been greatly deepened concerning the sin of unwatchfulness in the use of my tongue. We must be willing to be dumb, and not open our mouth, when God's order calls us to it; and to be fools in the eyes of man, that we may receive the true wisdom.

September 12.—This day I am forty-five years old. Lord, what hath my setting sun to shine on? Must I say, A lost life? O, how much of it hath been so! What might I have been! What might I have done for thee, O God! Yet this day I have had such a sense of the goodness of God toward me as I cannot express. I am filled with favours! I have the best of husbands, who daily grows more and more spiritual, and I think more healthful, being far better than when we first married. My call is also so clear, and I have such liberty in the work, and such sweet encouragement among the people. My servant too is much improved, and as faithful as if she was my own child. An income quite comfortable, and a good deal to help the poor with! O what shall I render to the Lord for all the mercies he hath shown unto me!

October.—As I was retired this morning at my ten o'clock hour, I was called down to Mary G——. I asked her if she still retained her spiritual liberty. I found by her answers that she did, which caused me to praise the Lord. She gave me a strange account, which I shall insert as she related it. A short time ago, she said, she was one day going out to work in the fields, but thought she would first go up stairs to prayer. While on her knees, praising God for the care he had taken of her children, she was amazed to see her eldest son, about

twenty-one years old, standing before her! She started up, but thought, May be it is the enemy to affright me from prayer. Casting her eyes again to the same spot, she still saw him there, on which she ran down into the kitchen, calling on the name of the Lord. Still, wherever she looked, she saw him standing before her, pale and as if covered with dirt! Concluding from this that he was killed, she ran to her mother, who, on hearing the account, went directly to the pit, determined to have him home, if alive. On her drawing near the pit she heard a great tumult, for the earth had fallen in on him and two other men, and the people were striving to dig them out. At length he was got up alive and well, and came home to his mother, pale and dirty, just as she had seen him! She then fell on her knees, and began praising that God who hears and answers prayer! Many of the ungodly neighbours having been witness to the whole transaction, are much affected, and I trust this very strange occurrence will work for good.*

October.—Yesterday I was very much taken up in house affairs. Various things occurred which would at sometimes have been a burden; but every thing seemed blessed. These words were all day the language of my heart,—

“ With thee delighted I forget
All time, and toil, and care;
Labour is rest, and toil is sweet,
If thou, my God, be there.”

It was a day of prayer and sweet recollection. This day also I have found much of the presence of God. O for a power of self-denial in all things to do his will!

November 12.—We have been married three years this day. A good day it has been to me! My spirit has been much drawn out in prayer for a farther lift of faith, without which I am sensible I cannot obtain the fulfilment of that promise, “ Her clothing shall be of wrought gold!” As I was this day reflecting on the wonderful goodness of God in my providential union with my dear husband, (so far, so very far, beyond my warmest wishes,) my heart

* Was not this extraordinary dispensation permitted for the good of these ignorant ungodly persons, who were not likely to be moved by more rational means?—ED.

was enlarged with desire to render to my God a suitable return for all his mercies ! I cried from the bottom of my soul to the Father, that he would draw me to the Son ! I called on Christ as my living head ! It was a peculiar season. These words have ever since abode on my mind :—

“ See him to thy help come down,
The excellence Divine.”

November 16.—A thought struck my mind to-night, as I was looking over some part of my diary, that there is not praise enough for spiritual blessings. I express my wants, but I ought to praise the Lord without ceasing, that he gives me such an open door to pour out my wants into his bosom ; and the answers to prayer I have of late found, have been so quick, so certain, and so wonderful, I am amazed !

In July last, we believed the Lord called us to Yorkshire for a few weeks,* and many answers to prayer did we meet with in that journey. Soon after our return, my dear husband was called to take another journey. I knew he would meet with much fatigue therein ; and every journey hurts him much ; but I was amazed at the calm resignation I felt ; the language of my heart was,

“ Happy to meet, yet free to part,
Through thee for ever one in heart.”

This autumn I have been a good deal among the people, and have found great liberty both in public and private meetings. Two dear souls have been lately brought in ; and though persecution burns hot against them, they are yet firm, and rejoice that they “ are counted worthy to suffer for the cause of God.” Lord, keep them, and make them firm as the beaten anvil to the stroke !

Lord’s day.—My dear husband was very poorly, and had much appearance of a fever. In the morning meeting I told the dear women we must hold him up by prayer ; and indeed I felt our prayers had free access to the Lord. It would have warmed a heart of stone to have heard Mary Matthews give her simple, yet solid and wise declaration of the goodness of God. She had been a long time creeping hither with her sore leg ; but she seemed scarce to

* To attend the conference ; the last at which Mr. Fletcher was present.—Ed.

know which to praise God most for, the strength he had given her to do so, or the pain she had felt all the night before! "For," said she, "if I had not had pain, I should have slept. But instead of that, I had such a Divine visit from my Lord, and such sweet intercourse with him, I would not have been without it for all the world." This woman grows much in grace; she is to me a great consolation, and a help in training up some of the lambs of the flock. She had been for some years in a mourning state, (though she still retained her faith,) but the first Sabbath my dear husband and I spoke in the kitchen, she was set at liberty while these words were sung:—

"The year of jubilee is come!
Return, ye ransom'd sinners, home!"

January 5, 1785.—I have this day been looking over my many mercies, and my heart was melted into love! O what a prospect! Lord, speak again to my heart, "Thou shalt walk with me in white!" I cast my whole self on thy mercy! So much I feel of it as makes me rest under thy shadow! Thy will shall be my choice! Sometimes I think I am so surrounded with comforts, I shall not answer that character, "These are they which came out of great tribulation." But I abandon myself to thy dear will, only let me glorify thee to the uttermost! Yea, with every power! It was a good time last night also while at the prayer meeting.

Yesterday I went with my dear husband to —, but being taken ill, I was forced to return home. This is often the case with me. I am oft disappointed in what appears at first the will of God; but at this time it was far otherwise. I felt a pleasure in appearing mean and good for nothing. Yes, I will glory in my infirmity, that the will of God may be done in me!

July 2.—Much blessed to-day while my dear husband was preaching the sermon to the club. I had a sweet sight how union with God could transform the soul into his own image.

July 26.—This summer being dry, I have had much opportunity of going about. One day, at the Rough Park, I had a peculiar instance of the goodness of God. A son of Belial, a wicked, rude fellow, bound himself and another

young man, whom he had drawn in, under a blasphemous oath, that they would be there by the time we began, in order to make a disturbance. Accordingly, about six o'clock, he was for setting off,—when he was suddenly struck as with death. All about him really thought he was dying. He continued thus for some hours. O how easily can the Lord put his bridle into the jaws of those he would restrain! I gave it out to be there again that day fortnight, but in the meantime I walked to a distant place, rather beyond my strength; however, we had a good time. On my return home, I felt very weary, and the thought passed my mind, My soul is too swift for my body; for it seemed as if it would fly to those places where there appeared a call. My earthly frame, however, was too heavy to drag after it. That night I began to grow ill, and it terminated in a fever. My limbs swelled a good deal, and I was covered with red spots; but had not much pain. Now I had a fresh instance of the tender care and love of my blessed partner: sickness was made pleasant by his kind attention. When the day came for me to be at the Rough Park, he went himself, but was so penetrated with the thought of losing me, that he preached as it were my funeral sermon; and the dear people joined him in his feelings and prayer. During this illness many thoughts passed my mind, which I can scarce account for. For a good while past my dear husband has joined with me in prayer in an uncommon manner. We are led to offer ourselves to do and suffer all the will of God. Something seems to tell me I must have more of the bitter cup; and these words are much with me: "That I may stand in the evil day, and having done all—stand." My prayer is, That the evil day may be before death,—not at the last. But, *Lord, thy will—thy whole will be done!*

Certainly I have now scarce any cross. Thou hast made my cup to run over! Yea, thou hast made me to forget all my sorrows. It seems as if I had never suffered any thing! There is not a comfort I can wish for which I have not;—but, Lord, I want more grace!

October 25.—When I wrote last, (July 26,) I was indeed arrived at the summit of human felicity! My cup did indeed run over! I often said, Lord! how is this? Am I indeed one of those of whom it is said, "These are

they who came out of great tribulation?" My way is strewn with roses. I am ready to say, with Joseph, "The Lord hath made me to forget all my afflictions, and all my father's house!"

But O! how shall I write it! On the fourteenth of August, 1785, the dreadful moment came! The sun of my earthly joys for ever set, and the cloud arose which casts the sable on all my future life! At half past ten that Sabbath night, I closed the eyes of my beloved! What a change! The whole creation wears a new face to me. The posture of my mind at this season I will not trust to my memory to describe. I will leave it in the rough manner I then set it down. Perhaps some one walking in the same dreary path may find a little comfort therefrom. To others it may be dry and insipid. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness."

On September 15, 1785, I wrote in my diary as follows: "I am truly a desolate woman, who hath no helper but thee." I remember a little before the translation of my dearest love, we were drawn out continually to ask for a greater measure of the Spirit—such a measure as was given at pentecost: or in other words, such a manifestation of the loving nature of God, as should fulfil in us that promise, "Ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost." This I asked and pleaded for, and that on any condition. My dear Mr. Fletcher used to say, "That is right, Polly; let us hold fast there, and leave all the rest to God, though he should be constrained to part us asunder to give the answer."

On the Tuesday before my love died, when those words were applied to my mind, "Where I am, there shall my servants be, that they may behold my glory," I felt such a power in them, as seemed in a great degree to take away the bitterness even of that dreadful cup. "To behold my glory!" That thought would for moments swallow up all, and I seemed to lose myself in the desire of his glory being manifested. But that awful night! when I had hung over my dear husband for many hours, expecting every breath to be his last, and during which time he could not speak to, nor take any notice of me, a flood of unspeakable sorrow overspread my heart, and quite overwhelmed my spirit. I was scarcely in my senses; and such a fear seized my

soul lest I should say or do any thing displeasing to the Lord, that I was torn as it were a thousand ways at once.

My fatigue had been great: I was barely recovered of my fever, and this stroke so tore my nerves, that it was an inlet to much temptation. In former parts of my life, I have felt deep sorrow; but such were now my feelings, that no words that I am able to think of can convey any adequate idea thereof. The next morning—O my God! what a cup didst thou put into my hand! Not only my beloved husband, but it appeared to me my Saviour also, was torn from me! Clouds and darkness surrounded both soul and body! The sins even of my infancy came before me, and assaulted me as thick as hail! I seemed to have no love, no faith, no light; and yet I could not doubt but I should see the smiling face of God in glory! Yea, that heaven would terminate all my sufferings! There did not seem one dart thrown at my *final* salvation. An unshaken belief that Christ would bring me through all, was my great support; and it seemed to me, that I must have been annihilated had I been moved from that anchor. No finite creature could have supported it. My agonized soul seemed to sweat blood; and I felt the meaning of those words, "The pains of hell gat hold upon me!" What, said I, is this the soul that but a few days ago delighted in the thought of "His glory!" But now he hath entered into judgment with me! My soul was amazed, and in deep anguish; and literally my life drew nigh to the grave!

When formerly I have read accounts like this, I have thought, These persons have a strong way of expressing themselves; but, alas! I solemnly declare, no expression appears to me strong enough for what I felt. That word passed my mind several times:—

"Even to his Father did he look
In pain—his Father him forsook!"

A host of foes seemed to surround me, and I was (as it appeared to me) given into their hands.* Those words came

* This whole account describes truly "the hour and the power of darkness. The blast of the terrible ones" was indeed "as a storm against the wall!" But this "follower of Christ," nevertheless, "walked not in darkness." She, like her Master, could say, "My God! my God!" when her "soul was sorrowful even unto

often to my mind, "To know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." Sometimes I remembered that expression, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" I cast my mournful eyes toward the "Man of sorrows" who spoke them, but there seemed no answer; all was horror and darkness.

Many times a day I visited my lovely corpse, remembering, as I knelt beside him, how he used to say, "Ah! my dear Polly, must I ever see thee laid out on this bed!" But, alas! he could no more speak to me—no more express his tender sympathy! Now "I trod the winepress alone," and truly "there was none with me." The rest of the day I sat mostly alone in the next room, where my window presented to my view the grave digging, and the churchyard visited by numbers to look at the vault! Soon it occurred to my mind, that before we married some letters had passed between us on particular subjects, which he had often told me I had better burn; saying, "Thou puttest it off; and if one of us should die, it will almost kill the other to do it then." Yet, being loath to part with them, I had neglected to do it; but now being seized with a kind of palsy, and loss of memory, I thought, Perhaps in another day I may not be able to do it, and then I shall be unfaithful to my dear husband's command. The third day, therefore, I carried them to the fire. But O! what did I feel at the sight! I could not even avoid seeing some of the tender expressions they contained, which were now as barbed arrows to my heart. Next day came on the funeral.

All this time my soul was as in the lion's den. The day after I heard that some reports were abroad concerning my dear husband's death—as if he had been delirious, and expired in great agonies. I believed I was called to write the truth; and casting myself on the Lord, to be guided by his hand as a mere machine, I took up my pen and wrote to Mr. Wesley the following letter. I wrote it at one sitting, intending to copy it afterward; but I had no more strength than just sufficed for the occasion. I sent it, therefore, as it was, to the press, and left it all to God.

death." Thus, "Heaven its choicest gold by suffering tried." The saint sustained it—but the woman felt: and she no more disguised her feelings than our Divine Master did.—Ed.

“ August 18, 1785.

“ REV. AND VERY DEAR SIR :—Though but yesterday I parted with my beloved husband’s remains, I must now endeavour to collect my wounded mind, as I would not have any of his words fall to the ground, and give, if possible, some account of the awful, but, to him, glorious scene.

“ Our union increased daily, as did his health and strength ; his consumptive complaint appeared quite removed, and in my eyes the bitterness of death was past. The work was sweetly prospering, and in a variety of circumstances the sun of prosperity shone around us.

“ For some time before this last illness, his precious soul (always alive to God) was particularly penetrated with the nearness of eternity ; there was scarce an hour in which he was not calling upon me to drop every thought and every care, that we might attend to nothing but drinking deeper into God. We spent much time in wrestling prayer for the fulness of the Spirit, and were led in a very peculiar manner to an act of *abandonment* (as we called it) of our whole selves into the hands of God, to do or suffer whatever was pleasing to him. On Thursday, August 4, he was taken up in the work of God from three in the afternoon till nine at night ; when he came home, he said, ‘ I have taken cold.’ Friday and Saturday he was but poorly, though he went out part of the day, but seemed uncommonly drawn out in prayer. On Saturday night his fever first appeared very strong. I begged him not to go to the church in the morning, but let a pious brother who was here preach in the yard ; but he told me he believed it was the will of the Lord, and that he was assured it was right he should go ; in which case I never dared to dissuade him. As I was in the morning with a little company of our pious women, I begged they would pray that he might be strengthened, and that I might have a grain of that faith which supported the faithful when their friends were martyred. In reading the prayers he almost fainted away. I got through the crowd with a friend, and entreated him to come out of the desk, as did some others ; but he let us know, in his sweet manner, that we were not to interrupt the order of God. I then retired to my pew, where all around me were in tears. When he was a little

refreshed by the windows being opened, and a nosegay thrown into the desk by a friend, he went on; and afterward going up into the pulpit, preached with a strength and recollection that surprised us all.

"In his first prayer he said, 'Lord, thou wilt manifest thy strength in weakness; we confer not with flesh and blood, but put our trust under the shadow of thy wings.'

"His text was from Psalm xxxvi, 'Thou, Lord, shalt save both man and beast; how excellent is thy mercy, O God; and the children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.'

"After he had pointed out the Saviour of mankind, and observed, how some by sin had made themselves beasts, he showed that the promise, even in that sense, might be applied to the sinner, as well as to the beasts of the earth: and in speaking to these, with his usual earnestness, he *pressed, invited, and entreated* them to return unto God, *enforcing* those words of our Lord when he came near to Jerusalem, and wept over it: 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.' These words peculiarly pierced the hearts of many, as they have since told me. He continued to observe, in nearly the following words, 'That the wings of the Lord are compared to those of an eagle for strength and protection,' Exodus xix, 'I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.' And to those of a hen for love and care, 'Like as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.' In the Jewish tabernacle, where was the holy of holies, two cherubim were placed, whose extended wings joining together overshadowed the mercy seat. When Christ died upon the cross, his arms were stretched out, and these were as wings of love which he opened, and still holds wide open, to receive all that come unto him; let us then, when we see his love and power thus united to save and bless us, enter boldly into the holy of holies through the door of Divine mercy. A friend threw me some flowers to revive me when I was faint, but the mercy of the Lord is far more reviving; it is this I would hold out to you, and drop it into your very bosoms; may it sink deep there, that you may 'taste and see how good the Lord is,' and confess that his saving mercy is above

the richest perfume, for 'he saves both man and beast!'

"After sermon he went up the aisle to the communion table, with these words: 'I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim before the mercy seat.'

"The congregation was large, and the service held till near two. Sometimes he could scarcely stand, and was often obliged to stop for want of power to speak. The people were deeply affected. Weeping was on every side. Gracious Lord! how was it my soul was kept so calm in the midst of the most tender feelings? Notwithstanding his extreme weakness, he gave out several verses of hymns, and various lively sentences of exhortation. As soon as the service was over, we hurried him away to his bed, where he immediately fainted away. He afterward dropped into a sleep for some time, and upon waking, cried out, with a pleasant smile, 'Now my dear, thou seest I am no worse for doing the Lord's work: he never fails me when I trust in him.' After he had got a little dinner he dozed most of the evening; now and then waking (as was usual with him) full of the praises of God. That night his fever returned, but not so bad as on Saturday; nevertheless from Sunday his strength decreased amazingly. On Monday and Tuesday we had a little paradise together; he lay on a couch in the study, and was at times very restless, as to change of posture, but sweetly pleasant, and often slept for a good while. When awake, he delighted much in hearing me read hymns and tracts on faith and love. His words were all animating, and his patience beyond what I can express. When he had any bitter or nauseous medicine to take, he seemed to enjoy the cross, reminding me of a word he used often to repeat, that our business was to seek a perfect conformity to the will of God, and then leave him to give us what comfort he saw good. I asked him, if he should be taken from me, whether he had any particular directions or orders to give me, since I desired to form my whole life thereby. He replied, 'No, not by *mine*, the Holy Ghost shall direct thee; I have nothing particular to say, only that the Lord will open all before thee; and let not any one bring thee into bondage. If I stay with thee, I will keep thee from oppression; but if I should be

taken from thee, beware.' I said, Hast thou any conviction the Lord is about to take thee? He answered, 'No, not in particular; only I always see death so inexpressibly near, that we both seem to stand as on the verge of eternity.' While he slept a little, I laid my trial before the Lord, entreating him, if it was his good pleasure, to spare my beloved husband a little longer; but my prayer seemed to have no wings. It was held down, and I could not help mingling continually therewith, Lord, give me perfect resignation! This uncertainty in my own mind made me rather tremble, lest the Lord was going to take the bitter cup out of my dear's hand, and give it unto me. The cup of separation he had for some weeks before very deeply drank of, when I myself was ill of the fever. At that time he often passed through the whole parting scene, and struggled for the fortitude of perfect resignation. Sometimes he would say at that season, 'O Polly! shall I ever see the day when thou must be carried out to be buried? How will the little things which thou wast accustomed to use, and all those which thy tender care has prepared for me in every part of the house, how will they wound and distress me! How is it! I think I feel jealousy—I am jealous of the worms! I seem to shrink at giving my dear Polly to the worms!'

"Now all these reflections returned with a millstone's weight on my heart. I cried to the Lord, and those words were deeply impressed on my spirit: 'Where I am, there shall my servants be, that they may behold my glory.' This promise was full of matter as well as unction to my soul. It explained itself thus: That in *Christ's immediate* presence was *our home*, and that we should find our reunion in being deeply centred in him. I received it as a fresh marriage for eternity. As such I still take, and trust for ever to hold it. All that day, whenever I thought of this expression, 'to behold my glory,' it seemed to wipe every tear away, and was as the ring by which we were joined anew.

"Awaking some time after, he said, 'Polly, I will tell you what I have been thinking of; it was Israel's fault that they asked for *signs*; we will not do so; but abandoning our whole selves into the hands of God, we will there lie patiently before him, assured that he will do all things well.'

" 'My dear love,' said I, 'if ever I have done or said any thing to grieve thee, how will the remembrance wound my heart, shouldst thou be taken from me!'

" He entreated and charged me, with inexpressible tenderness, not to allow the thought; declaring his thankfulness for our union, in a variety of words which remain written on my heart, as with the adamant pen of friendship deeply dipped in blood.

" On Wednesday, after groaning all day as it were under the weight of the power of God, he told me he had received such a manifestation of the full meaning of that word, 'God is love,' as he could never be able to tell. It *fills me*, said he; it *fills me* every moment. O Polly! my dear Polly! *God is love!* shout, shout aloud! O! it so fills me, I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth. But it seems as if I could not speak much longer; let us fix on a sign between ourselves, (tapping me twice with his dear finger,) now I mean 'God is love, and we will draw each other into God: observe! by this we will draw each other into God.'

" Sally coming in, he cried out, 'O Sally! God is love! shout both of you; I want to hear you shout his praise.' Indeed it was a season of love. All this time the medical friend who attended him with unwearied diligence, hoped he was in no danger. He knew it to be the fever; but as he had no bad headache, much sleep, without the *least delirium*, and an almost regular pulse, seldom much quicker than my own, he thought the symptoms amazingly mild; for though the disease was commissioned to take his life, yet it seemed so restrained by the power of God, that we truly discerned in it the verity of those words, *Death is yours*.

" On Thursday his speech began to fail. While he was able he continued speaking to all who came in his way. Accidentally hearing that a stranger was in the house, he ordered her to be called up, though uttering two sentences almost made him faint. To his friendly doctor he would not be silent while he had any power of speech; often saying, 'O, sir, you take much thought for my body; give me leave to take thought for your soul.' And I believe his words will remain with that friend for ever. When I could scarcely understand any thing he said, I

spoke these words, 'God is love.' Instantly he caught them, as if all his powers were awakened afresh, and broke out in a rapture, '*God is love, love, love!* O for that gust of praise I want to sound!' Here his dear voice again failed. He was restless, and often suffered many ways, but with such patience as none but those who were with him can conceive. If I named his sufferings, he would smile, and make the sign.

"On Friday, finding his dear body covered with spots, I so far understood them, as to feel a sword pierce through my soul. As I was kneeling by his bed, with my hand in his, entreating the Lord to be with us in this tremendous hour, he strove to say many things, but could not. Pressing my hand, and often repeating the sign, at last he breathed out, 'Head of the Church, be head to my wife.' When, for a few moments I was forced to leave him, to gather up some sheets of one of his manuscripts, which I feared would be lost, Sally said to him, 'My dear master, do you know *me*?' He replied, 'Sally, God will put his right hand under you.' She added, 'O my dear master, should you be taken away, what a disconsolate creature will my poor dear mistress be!' He replied, 'God will be her all in all.' He had 'always delighted much in these words:—

'Jesus' blood through earth and skies,
Mercy, free, boundless mercy cries!

And whenever I repeated them to him, he would answer, *boundless, boundless, boundless!* and in allusion to them, he now replied, though with great difficulty,

'Mercy's *full* power *I soon* shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.'

"On Saturday afternoon his fever seemed quite off, and a few Christian friends standing near the bed, he reached his hand to each of them, and looking on a minister, who was weeping by him, he said, 'Are you ready to assist to-morrow?' Which recollection of his amazed us much, as the day of the week had not been named in his room. Most about him could not but believe he was better, and would get over it. One said, 'Do you think that the Lord will raise you up?' He strove to answer, saying, 'Raise in resur—, raise in resur—,' meaning in the

resurrection. To another who asked the same question, he said, 'I leave it all to God.'

"In the evening his fever returned with violence, and the mucus falling on the windpipe, occasioned him to be almost strangled. He suffered greatly; and it was feared the same painful emotion would continue and grow more violent to the last. This I felt most exquisitely, and cried to the Lord to remove it; and, glory be to his name, he did remove it; and it returned no more in that way. As night drew on, I thought I perceived him dying very fast; his fingers could now hardly move to make the sign, (which he seemed scarce ever to forget,) and his speech, as it seemed, was quite gone. I said, 'My dear creature, I ask not for myself; *I know thy soul*; but for the sake of others; if Jesus is very present with thee, lift thy right hand.' He did so. I added, 'If the prospect of glory sweetly opens before thee, repeat the sign.' He then raised it again, and in half a minute a second time; then threw it up with all his remaining strength, as if he would reach the top of the bed! After this his dear hands moved no more; but on my saying, 'Art thou in much pain?' he answered, 'No.' From this time he entered into a state that might be called a kind of sleep, though with eyes open and fixed, and his hands utterly void of any motion. For the most part he sat upright against pillows, with his head a little inclined to one side, and so remarkably composed and triumphant was his countenance, that the least trace of death was scarcely discernible in it.

"Twenty-four hours my dearly beloved was in this situation, breathing like a person in common sleep. About thirty-five minutes past ten, on Sunday night, August 14th, his precious soul entered into the joy of the Lord, without one struggle or groan, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. Often he had said, when hearing of happy deaths, 'Well, let us get holy lives, and we will leave the rest to God.' But I, who was scarce a minute at a time from him night or day, can truly say that there was the strongest reason to believe,

'No cloud did arise, to darken the skies,
Or hide, for one moment, his Lord from his eyes.'

"And here I break off my mournful story! I could say

abundance more ; but on my bleeding heart his fair picture of heavenly excellence will be for ever drawn. When I call to mind his ardent zeal, his laborious endeavours to seek and save the lost,—his diligence in the employment of his time,—his Christlike condescension toward me, and his uninterrupted converse with Heaven, I may well be allowed to add, my loss is beyond the power of words to paint. O sir, you know I have trodden deep waters ; but ‘ all my afflictions were nothing compared to this.’ Well, I want no pleasant prospect, but upward,—nor any thing whereon to fix my hope, but *immortality*.

“ On the 17th his dear remains were deposited in Madeley churchyard, amid the tears and lamentations of thousands, who flocked about the bier of their dead pastor. Between the house and the church, they sung these verses :—

‘ With heavenly weapons he hath fought
The battles of the Lord ;
Finish’d his course, and kept the faith,
And gain’d the great reward.
God hath laid up in heaven for him
A crown which cannot fade ;
The righteous Judge, at that great day,
Shall place it on his head.’

“ The service was performed by the Rev. Mr. Hatton rector of Waters-upton, whom the Lord moved in a pathetic manner to speak to his weeping flock on the sad occasion. In the conclusion, at my request, he read the following paper :—

“ As it was the desire of my beloved husband to be buried in this plain manner, so out of tenderness he begged that I might not be present ; and in all things I would obey him.

“ Permit me then to take this opportunity, by the mouth of a friend, to bear my open testimony to the glory of God, that I, who have known him in the most perfect manner, am constrained to declare, I never knew any one walk so closely in the ways of God as he did. The Lord gave him a conscience tender as the apple of an eye. He literally preferred the interest of every one to his own. He was rigidly just, but perfectly loose from all attachment to the world. He shared *his all* with the poor, who lay so close to his heart, that on the approach

of death, though his speech was so gone that he could utter nothing without difficulty, he cried out, *O, my poor ! what will become of my poor ! I am dead to my poor !* He was blessed with so great a degree of humility as is scarcely to be found. I am witness how often he has taken a real pleasure in being treated with contempt ; indeed it seemed the very food of his soul to be little and unknown. When he said to me, 'Thou wilt write a line or two to my brother in Switzerland, if I die,'—I replied, 'My dear love, I will write him all the Lord's dealings with thee.' 'No, no,' said he, 'write nothing about me. I desire to be forgotten ;—*God is all !*'

"His zeal for souls I need not tell you : let the labour of twenty-five years, and a martyr's death in the conclusion, imprint it on your hearts. His diligent visitation of the sick, laid, to appearance, the foundation of the spotted fever, which, by God's commission, tore him from you and me ; and his vehement desire to take his last leave of you, with dying lips and hands, gave (it is supposed) the finishing stroke, by preparing his blood for putrefaction. Thus hath he lived and died your servant. *And will any of you refuse to meet him at God's right hand in that day ?*

"He walked with death always in sight ; and about two months ago he came to me one day, and said, 'My dear love, I know not how it is, but I have a strange impression death is very near us, as if it be some sudden stroke upon one of us ; and it draws out all my soul in prayer that we may be ready.' He then broke out, *Lord, prepare the soul thou wilt call ; and O, stand by the poor disconsolate one who shall be left behind.*

"A few days before his departure, he was filled with love in an uncommon manner, saying to me, 'I have had such a discovery of the depth of that word, *God is love*, as I cannot tell thee half, but it *fills* me, it *fills* me. O Polly ! my dear Polly ! *God is love !* shout his praise ! I want a *gust of praise to reach to the ends of the earth.*' And the same he testified as long as he had voice, and continued to testify to the end, by a most *lamblike patience*, in which he victoriously smiled at death, and set his last seal to the glorious truths he had so long preached among you.

"Three years, nine months, and two days, I have possessed my heavenly minded husband ; but now, the sun of my earthly joy is set for ever, and my soul filled with an anguish which only finds its consolation in a total *abandonment* and *resignation* to the will of God ; an exercise to which my dear husband and I had of late been particularly drawn. When I was asking the Lord if he pleased to spare him to me a little longer, the following answer was impressed on my mind with great power, and in the accomplishment of this word of promise *I look for our reunion*, 'Where I am there shall my servants be, that they may behold my glory !' Lord, hasten the hour !

"I am, Rev. and dear sir, &c.,

"MARY FLETCHER."

"The Rev. Mr. Wesley."

My anguish was extreme. All outward support seemed to be withdrawn ; appetite and sleep quite failed me ; and even the air, I often thought, had entirely lost all its vivifying powers. As I never before had any conception of the bitter anguish which the Lord saw good to visit me with at this season ; so I can give no just description of it. "Known unto God are all his ways ;" and I was assured, even in the midst of my trouble, that all he did was well, and that there was a needs be for this heavy trial. But what bound all my other trials upon me was, I felt continually the keenest accusations from Satan, constraining me by every possible suggestion to look at my extreme sensibility in suffering as being deeply sinful ! What, thought I, has made this change ! If Jesus was my all, should I not feel as keenly the sense of his having suffered for me, as I do in the thought of my dear husband's kindness, and in the dreadful feeling of my separation from him ? And because I could feel but very faint touches of sensible communion with God, I was torn as it were in pieces. All my religion seemed shrunk into one point ; viz., a constant cry, *Thy will be done !* I will, yes, I will glorify thee, even in this fire !*

Yet it seemed to me I did not glorify him ; and so

* This is a fruit of the Spirit that never fails those who abide in the faith, even in the darkest hour.—Ed.

afraid was I of turning to any human comfort, or stopping short of all the Lord would have me to do or be, that in the midst of this terrible furnace, I can say,—that at every moment my conscience was “quick as the apple of an eye, the slightest touch of sin to feel.” Yea, my spirit was all eye to discern its most distant approach. Yet in every thing I seemed to be accused, and also condemned ; so that *my soul was indeed sorrowful even unto death.**

One morning before I was awake, I heard singing voices, as just over my face : they answered one another with these words,—

“ Weep ye in Zion’s deep distress,
In Zion’s sorrow mourn.”

Then one voice, which I well knew to be that of my dearest love, spake in distinct words, and with much emphasis,—

“ Fight the good fight of faith with me,
My fellow soldier, fight.”

It gave me some little comfort, and animated me to follow his bright example.

One day these words were applied with much power to my heart, “ These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” What, said I, did the apostle, who had been in the third heaven, and knew well what he said,—did he call these afflictions light when put in the scale with that glory ? It was answered in my heart, Yes, as a bubble ! “ compared with the glory that shall be revealed.” I got a momentary glimpse of our home above, in the celestial city ; and those words were spoken through my heart,—

“ Heaven is thy inheritance,
Thou shalt soon remove from hence.”

Very many were these little inbreakings of light, yea, often in a day ;—yet my pain was unspeakable. I was constantly perplexed with that thought, that a believer can never be in darkness ; that they always “ rejoice

* In all this I believe the pious and well informed reader will be satisfied that, (as the Holy Ghost testifies of Job,) “ she sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”—ED.

with joy unspeakable and full of glory ;” that nothing but sin given way to, can damp their joy.* This was an inlet to much temptation ; and now I had no one to tell my troubles to ! no partner to bear a share in them. In all our spiritual conflicts we had been so entirely one, that cares, by being divided, were hushed into peace. A word from him would frequently light up, as it were, a candle in my soul ; and was enough to turn aside the keenest temptation. But now I trod the winepress alone, and felt my dependence had been too much on the creature. I had clung to him as the ivy to the oak, and now seemed to be nothing ! I saw myself left in a howling wilderness alone ! Yet still I could say,—

“ With thee I on Zion shall stand,
For Jesus hath spoken the word.”

But the Lord seemed to do by me as by the Canaanitish woman ; *He did not answer me* !—I followed, and often said in my heart, (reflecting on all my unfaithfulness,) Ah ! “ It is not meet to take the children’s bread and cast it to the dogs !” It seemed I could to all eternity have praised him for the least drop of comfort ; and yet I felt the power of these words,—

“ A drop will not suffice,
My soul for all thy fulness cries.”

In the midst of this dreadful conflict I felt some consolation from the thought, that by the account of his precious death, which surely the Lord himself prompted, and enabled me to write, (as I had hardly at the time either sense or memory,) I had helped, in a little measure, that shout of praise to go forth, which, with his dying lips, he said he wanted to reach the ends of the earth ! And though I have lost my dear husband, and felt the force of the “ hour and power of darkness,” yet through all I believed I should conquer. So it is with me now ; but I do not seem as yet to have the privilege of shouting victory.

As soon as the funeral was over, I found the dear children which my beloved partner had left behind, laid upon my mind. I saw there were many things to settle among them respecting the work of God ; some dangerous rocks

* Yes, temptation can *damp* their joy ; but only sin can *destroy* it. Her joy was not destroyed : she had “ times of refreshing.”—ED.

to avoid, and some needful plans to propose. Therefore, before another week passed, I saw I must act among them, and meet the people the same as before ;—and though very ill, and filled with sorrow, the Lord enabled me to do so—showing me the only way to bear the cross profitably was so to carry it as if I carried it not. About a fortnight before my dear husband's last sickness, he was one night at the Wednesday meeting, when being greatly affected about me, as I was ill at that time, he could hardly get through it. He said to me afterward, "My dear, I could scarcely speak to the people. I felt, I knew not how, as if thy empty chair stood by me! Something seemed to say we should soon be parted; and I thought, Must I meet these people, and see my Polly's empty chair always by me?" But now the cup was mine. Yea, and I have drunk it to the very dregs!

September 21, 1785.—Ah! Lord, my soul is exceeding sorrowful! How lonely doth my situation appear! Torn from my dear companion, and made to walk in this dreary path! , But this is my greatest weight—I do not feel that union with thee that would make up all. There are indeed moments in which a glimpse of thy love seems to unite me to all good, and wipes away every tear. But these are transient touches, and I am deeply oppressed with that fear that I am not approved in thy sight, because I do not *rejoice evermore!* I well know I want a farther plunge into thy sacred will. I am not yet "the temple of the Holy Ghost."

For some time back those words have been much on my mind, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may stand in the evil day, and having done all, may stand." I have sometimes said, Lord, have I passed that evil day, or is it still to come? And I always felt with submission a desire it might not be in death. O Lord! do all thy will upon me, but make me wholly conformable with thy divine nature! Glorify thyself in thy poor creature! I feel as if soul and body would be divided by this terrible wrench! Yet I acquiesce, fully acquiesce, in thy divine disposal. Yes, I see and admire thy wisdom! I bow down to a dispensation I do not clearly understand! The Lord hath done it! and that shall be enough to satisfy me. I remember one of my dear husband's dying sayings was,


Polly, let us not fear, God is love! What canst thou fear, my dearest, when God is love? I feel it is the truth; nevertheless, I do not feel perfect rest in that truth, for want of that perfect love which casteth out all fear. Nothing will do for me but the indwelling Deity! "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

October 3, 1785.—My sorrowful soul waiteth on thee, O Lord! O what a cloud there is on my whole situation! Three months ago I was raised to the highest pitch of human consolation. I often thought all that God could give of temporal comforts was poured upon me. Whenever I was hearing any one speak of the afflictions they were under, I used to be humbled to the very dust. Something would suggest, Ah! you may well bear your crosses, and rejoice that ye have such a treasure continually augmenting in your bosom; but let God only lay his hand on your husband, and see then whether you will bless him! It seemed to me that I so honoured any of my fellow-creatures who were in trouble, that I could kiss the very dust from their feet, and was often filled with astonishment, why such a wretch as I was spared their bitter cup! But now I drink it indeed; yet at the same time I can say, I see it my privilege to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," without asking where, or to what new cross he will lead me. O what should I do were it not for the privilege of pouring out my soul in prayer! Lord! come and make thine abode in me!

One day, when I had some reason to think this house would be wanted, and that I must quit it, I began to consider where I had best remove to. I reflected on my dear husband's words, when he said, a little before he lost his speech, "Stay here, my dear;—I do not speak for the people only, but for thy sake. Thou wilt never be so well settled again. Here thou wilt be most out of the way from many things which would be a cross and a hindrance to thee." It was therefore very painful for me to think of taking one single step in any thing contrary to his advice. And yet I must own, had he not all along said I must stay here, I believe I could not have resolved so to do, for every day brought me some cutting trial. A new ministry, a new plan for the work, and various causes of anxiety and trouble,

But now it appeared I must remove. I began to think of one place and another, but every one seemed to bear the gloom of night. I could see no spot in the creation for me to rest in. A peculiar inward feeling, also, seemed to turn from every place I could think of, as if the smile of God was not on my going there. I said, Lord, show me what I shall do! Only show me what is thy will! I thought on two places the most likely; and had some desire to draw a lot concerning them. I had the paper in my hand in order so to do, when the remembrance of my dearest love was presented strongly to my mind, as speaking again those words, "Polly, do not let us look for signs; let us leave ourselves in the hand of God." I felt an immediate light of faith, and throwing the paper out of my hand, I took up the Bible, intending to read, and for the present to drop every other thought. It opened on those words: "God shall choose our inheritance for us." All my spirit acquiesced, and I answered, "Yea, Lord! Thou hast chosen for my dear the bright mansions above; and thou wilt choose for me all my wanderings below." There seemed for a moment such a communion opened between the family below and that above, as I cannot express.

Soon after this I received a message from Mr. Kener-son, letting me know that I should never be turned out of the house, but might rent it; which I received as an answer from the Lord directing my way. It also brought to my mind a dream I had some years before I married. I dreamed a man came to me to offer me some tithes. I replied, "Friend, I have nothing to do with tithes—I have no concern in any living." But soon after, I said to one of my family, "Hannah, I am going away; I have a call from the Lord; I must go." But again I thought, I know not where, not even into what country. However, the way of duty is the way of safety. I will set out, and God will lead me. Immediately I left Cross Hall, and after walking a few paces, I thought I was carried in a moment, I knew not how, and set down in a churchyard—and some one said to me, You are to enter into this church. I went in, and walking up the aisle, I heard a kind of groan, and said, That is the sound of death. When I came out of the church, I entered into a house which was just by it. As I was on the steps, it was said inwardly

to me, This is the habitation which God hath chosen for you. I answered, O no ; I cannot live here. It is the order of God for me to live in Yorkshire. I went into some of the rooms, and found in one I passed through a man and woman. In the next was a young woman with a child on her lap. She appeared dying of a consumption, and in great conflicts. We soon entered into conversation, and she seemed very spiritual. After a time she told me I must come and live here, and here abide. I replied, "O no ; I live at Cross Hall, in Yorkshire ; and have a great family and many calls there." But, said she, it is the will of God to bring you here. There is work for you to do. She added, Do not be frightened ; God will make you a comfortable habitation. I said, Have you the Gospel here ? She replied, Yes. And who, said I, is the minister that brought it among you ? She replied, He is not here now. Then who, said I, is your present minister ? She showed me a name of three syllables ;—but though I read it over and over, I could only remember the two last—"nerson." I felt myself in great anguish and sorrow of mind, (though I could not assign any cause,) and said, I must go away, I cannot stay here. I do not know that man and woman. I cannot live with them. She replied, "That man and woman will go away when you come. But here is  work for you to do, and you must abide here. Do not be frightened ; God will make you a comfortable habitation." Being determined, however, to return home, I went down stairs, and seeing a coach ready to be hired, I beckoned to it ; the man opened the door, and as I was stepping in, he said, Where will you be carried to ? I strove to say, Cross Hall, in Yorkshire, but could not. Then I strove to name various habitations I had formerly lived in, but could remember the name of none. As he still persevered in his questions, I at last stepped back, and pointing to the house I came out of, I said, "That is my home, and God hath taken the remembrance of every other out of my heart."

I knew nothing of the situation of any thing in Madeley when I had this dream ; but when, some years after, I told it to my dear Mr. Fletcher, he said, "There was a man and woman who lived with me at that time—and a young woman, A. C., who was very useful in the work, to which

she proved a nursing mother. She died of a consumption, in which she had many conflicts." I said, Was there a minister here whose name ended with *ner*son? He replied, "No." But now I understand it all. Had I before remembered the whole name, I should at once have known this dream would be fulfilled at my dear husband's death, as Mr. Kenerson was the patron, and his son now became our vicar. My dear Mr. Fletcher always said, if he died, he believed I was to stay here;—and there are some circumstances which reconcile me so to do.

First,—I never was in any situation in which I had so much opportunity of doing good, (according to my small abilities,) as in this place, and that in various ways, public and private; and to many who live at a distance also. These are providentially thrown in my way, and I find such clear leadings of the Spirit in conversing with them, that (painful as many circumstances are) I am constrained to say, If I choose for the work of God, *here* I must abide and fix my home.*

Secondly,—Here I have a great many sweet, lively souls to converse with. My meetings are more satisfactory to myself than in any place I ever yet was in; and still I feel it suited to me, as a soil which my soul grows in.

Thirdly,—It suits my temporal affairs; this house

* At the last conference which Mr. Fletcher attended, viz., at Leeds, August, 1784, (about a year before his death,) I had the privilege of sitting very near him. About the middle of the conference he rose, and addressed Mr. Wesley respecting his parish. He said, "I fear my successor will not be interested in the work of God, and my flock may suffer. I have done what I could; I have built a chapel in Madeley Wood, and I hope, sir, you will continue to supply it, and that Madeley may still be part of the circuit. If you please, I should be glad to be put down in the minutes as a supernumerary!" Mr. Wesley could hardly bear this, and the preachers were melted into tears. Turning to them, Mr. Fletcher expressed his hope that they would feed his sheep, and nourish them with the same truths which they had been used to hear. How wonderfully did the Lord provide for them when he was pleased to remove their angelic pastor! "My dear," said he to Mrs. Fletcher, "when you marry me, you must marry my parish." She did so; and as the new vicar did not reside, and as he had a great respect for Mrs. Fletcher, she was allowed to recommend the curate, whom the vicar invariably appointed, according to that recommendation. The work of God has thus continued, and proceeded, for thirty years in peace. May it never be interrupted!—Ed.

being cheap, and several other circumstances also are advantageous.

Fourthly,—I never found any other part agree as well with my health as this has done. From a child I could never live in London, nor in any close place; and here I have had better health than ever before:—only at this season, I find the waves of sorrow have thrown me some paces nearer my eternal home. Truly, also, that part of my dream (the sound of death) hath been accomplished in all its pomp!

Would any know the king of terrors? Let them look on the corpse of a beloved husband, or tender friend, and there discern the consequences of sin! For a believer to look at death, as seizing on himself, has comparatively no terror! In the midst of the most pleasant scene my life had ever exhibited, I sometimes said, "I think, my love, I am selfish: it seems as if I should not fear to die and leave thee! I am deeply sensible, however, of all the pain thou wouldst feel. Yet it seems as if we should not be divided even by death." But now the scene is turned! It is my eyes that must for ever have before them that tremendous night. O! what do I feel! *Thy will, O Lord, be done!*

From this time I have been more and more convinced, my inheritance is appointed of the Lord, and that this is the spot I am to fix on, at least for the present; and I rather believe I shall change no more,—but that where he died, I shall die also. During this heavy night of sorrow, (attended with such aggravating circumstances as it is not needful to explain,) I have also seen an amazing mixture of the tender care and fatherly protection of my God. *He withholds his rough wind in the day of his east wind*; and will lay no more on his poor creatures than his power and goodness will enable them to bear. I know, assuredly, that my bereavement was wrought for the good of my soul. I am, notwithstanding my inward trials, and deep sensibility of my loss, truly enabled to praise God even for the severity of the stroke. Yes, I love his will, I love his cross! I am, I will be devoted to his glory! And if that can be promoted by my keen anguish, I will delight in suffering all his wisdom shall appoint!

I see also the goodness of the Lord in our bringing Sally Lawrence with us here. The day we were married, as soon as we returned from the church, and went up stairs to ask a blessing on our union, she came into the room, and falling on her knees before my dear husband, she entreated him not to part her from her dear mistress, who had brought her up. He told her he never would; and now she is made to me a great comfort, having all the usefulness of a housekeeper, added to the affection of the tenderest child.

The Lord has also answered my dear husband's prayers with regard to the work of the Lord, beyond all expectation. When he repeatedly expressed his desire that I should stay here, I replied, O how can I bear the place without thee? How can I bear to stay, and see perhaps a carnal ministry? He answered, "Thou dost not know what God may do. Perhaps there may never be a carnal ministry here." And so it proved. The Rev. Mr. Gilpin and his wife, being on the spot, were at that season kind and tender friends to me, and Mr. Kenerson desired him to supply the church till he should return to his own living, which was not for some months. The Lord then provided for us a precious young man, Mr. Melville Horne, who had travelled some time in connection with Mr. Wesley; and concerning whom my dear Mr. Fletcher had (before his illness) expressed a desire that he might be his successor. We have also the Methodist preachers, and their labours are blessed. Brotherly love takes root, and flourishes among us. The work goes on well; fresh converts are continually brought in, and several have with flowing eyes declared, that the words they once slighted, now seem to rise in judgment against them. They bow to the truth, and are constrained to acknowledge, concerning their deceased pastor, He being dead, yet speaketh.

The Lord hath also looked on my temporal affairs, beyond what I could have expected. I observed, soon after my marriage, that all was now made quite easy. I looked on the promise as already fulfilled, having in Layton a good deal more than would pay all. Some hundreds were however still on interest, though we had lessened the sum while my dear and I were together. But soon after he

was taken from me, I received a letter from a person of whom I had borrowed some years before a hundred and fifty pounds, that he wanted it directly ; and I had at this season a good deal to pay on other accounts. As I wished to be free, for the remainder of my short days, from unnecessary care, I had a desire that the estate at Laytonstone should be sold, and the demands all settled at once. I found, however, that could not be done without loss, and therefore proposed to pay yearly all I could out of my income, which was now increased by the tender care of my dear husband. But my youngest brother, William Bosanquet, whom I had not seen for some years, came down on a visit to me. He expressed the greatest sympathy and tenderness toward me in this time of trial ; and, after staying with me some days, generously supplied me with all the cash I then needed. Some months after, an uncle dying without leaving me any thing, (and indeed I did not think I had any right to expect it,) my brothers wrote me word, that they were sorry I was not remembered in the will ; and my youngest brother desired me to accept of five hundred pounds (or more if I wanted it) to settle all my affairs. Here was the exact fulfilment of Mrs. Clapham's impression concerning us ! [See page 135.] This very brother whom she then saw, (though at that time there was not the least reason to think of any such thing,) did afterward, as it was represented to her, bring me many smaller sums, and at last one so large as to remove all burdens at once from my shoulders ! And on January, 1787, I wrote in my diary, *I now owe no man any thing but love : my income is quite clear, and I have, according to the promise, great plenty of silver.*

PART THE FIFTH.

HER SETTLEMENT AT MADELEY,—AND THOUGHTS ON COMMUNION WITH HAPPY SPIRITS.

December 15, 1785.

My soul is exceeding sorrowful. I feel the loss of my dearest husband in a manner I cannot express. Four months are now elapsed since I sustained that dreadful scene, yet it seems as if it was but yesterday. Nothing can comfort me but the blessing promised in those words, "I and my Father will come and make our abode with you." Nothing short of that baptism of the Holy Ghost can heal and satisfy my wounded soul. But I will endeavour to recollect the blessings which attend even my melancholy situation, and strive by steps of thankfulness to raise my heart from gratitude to exulting praise.

First,—I have the comfort of knowing my dear love is in glory. He hath proved the victory,—his "last enemy is destroyed!" Death shall no more threaten him with the cold grave; it is conquered for ever, and shall be "swallowed up in victory."

Secondly,—I had the consolation of being with him to the last moment, and hearing him, so long as he could speak, express how comfortable he was both inward and outward; praising God often for the comfortable attendance he had in the needful hour, and many times saying to me, "I am most sweetly filled, but I do not seem for much speaking; I am drawn inward."

Thirdly,—I rejoice that he told me, "God would open all my way before me;" and with his last blessing gave me to the Lord, saying, "Head of the Church, be head to my wife!"

Fourthly,—He feels no more from the fear of losing me. Perhaps he is nearer to me than ever! Perhaps he sees me continually, and, under God, guards and keeps me. Perhaps he knows my very thoughts. The above reflections, though under a *perhaps*, give me some help; but could they be confirmed by reason, and above all by

Scripture, they would yield me much consolation. I will try if I can find this solid ground for them.

It appears to me no way contrary to *reason* to believe that the happy departed spirits see and know all they would wish, and are divinely permitted to know. In this Mr. Wesley is of the same mind, (from whose writings I shall borrow some of my ideas)—and that they are concerned for the dear fellow pilgrims whom they have left behind. I cannot but believe they are; and though death is the boundary we cannot see through, they who have passed the gulf may probably see us. Some small insects can see but a little way; an apple would appear to them a mountain, but we can see a thousand of them at once, crawling on what we call a small spot of earth. When an infant is born into this world, how many senses, till then locked up, are on a sudden brought into action, and could the child reflect, a variety of new ideas would be awakened by which it would discern such a capacity of becoming useful and comfortable to its mother, as it never before had any conception of! It could have no communion with her but by *one sense*, that of feeling; but now it is enabled both to see, hear, and to make itself heard by her. There was an apparent separation from the mother; but in reality it has gained a more valuable possession, which every day increases its ability of entering into her thoughts, and bearing a part in all her feelings. And may we not suppose, if the use of sight and hearing, as well as the powers of understanding, are so improved by our birth into this lower world, that some powers analogous to the above are, at least, equally opened on the entrance of a spirit into a heavenly state; though perhaps small in the beginning, like the infant, compared with the measure that is to follow?

Nor doth it seem contrary to reason to suppose a spirit in glory can turn its eye with as much ease, and look on any object below, as a mother can look through a window and see the actions of her children in a court underneath it. If bodies have a language by which they can convey their thoughts to each other, though sometimes at a distance, have spirits no language, think-you, by which they can converse with our spirits, and by impressions on the mind, speak to us as easily as before they did by the

tongue? And what can interrupt either the presence, communion, or sight of a spirit?

“Walls within walls no more its passage bar,
Than unopposing space of liquid air.”

But may not our reasonable ideas be much strengthened by Scripture? Some encouragement on this head I have lately drawn from the account of Elijah and Elisha, (though I do not offer this as a proof, but rather as an illustration,) for as Elijah was to enter glory without passing through death, it is probable he was favoured before with a more than common intercourse and communion with the world of spirits, as we see in the works of Providence there is a gradual ascent; and I the rather believe this from some passages in his story. Near the time of his translation, it was revealed to the sons of the prophets, who said to Elisha, Knowest thou that thy master shall be taken from thy head to-day? But to Elijah himself perhaps it was revealed long before, and it seems to me, he referred to this when he was in the desert of Arabia, under the juniper tree, 1 Kings, chap. xix,—where he requested for himself that he might die, saying, (to this effect,) “It is enough, Lord, I am not better than my fathers.” The prophets before me have sealed thy truth with their blood, and why should I be exempt from the common lot of man? I had rather die, and come to thee *now*! Why should I live any longer? Thou hast enabled me to maintain thy cause against the worshippers of Baal; yet my word hath little weight with them. “They have slain thy prophets, and I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away.” Let them have it, for it is far better for me to depart and to be with thee. However, quite resigned to the will of God, he lays him down to sleep, till awaked by an angel of the Lord, who bids him arise, and take the refreshment a watchful Providence had provided for him. Here we have no account of any alarming fear. He doth not, like Daniel, fall down as one dead; nor, like Zachariah and the shepherds, become sore afraid; but after a moderate repast, he lies down to sleep again, and then receives a second visit from his bright messenger, for aught we see, with the same steady calmness as before. From

which, I am led to suppose, he was accustomed to such communications.

When his faith had gathered strength by his miraculous preservation, forty days and nights without food, full of holy expectation he arrives at Horeb, waiting a farther manifestation of the glory of God, as Moses, the *giver* of the law, had done in this very place before him. Nor can we suppose this illustrious *restorer* of the law could be totally forgetful of that prayer, "Lord, I beseech thee, show me thy glory!" The place would remind him of the great discoveries made there. What intercourse he might have with the spirit of Moses, we know not; but it is certain they knew each other some time after on Mount Tabor. Waiting thus, like his great predecessor, for a time, the glory of the Lord was displayed before him, and the question put, "What dost thou here, Elijah?" In his answer to which, he seems to intimate I have nothing to do *here*. Israel has departed from thy ways, and why should I abide on earth any longer. Let me *now* come up. As a pledge his prayer is heard—he is commanded to anoint Elisha to remain a prophet in his room. And when the appointed time was come, walking with Elisha, he seems desirous of being alone, (perhaps the powers of darkness now made their last assault, endeavouring to shake his faith with regard to the great event just ready to take place,) and bids his friend again and again to tarry behind. But Elisha, unwilling to lose any part of his blessing, answers, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." He then asks him, What shall I do for thee before I am taken away? Elisha answers, "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." To which Elijah replies, "Thou hast asked a hard thing." Now if a double portion of holiness was all Elisha meant, it was an odd answer, for we know there are no limits to that petition. We may ask as much of the nature of God as we please, and he will do "exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think." And no doubt Elijah knew enough of the mind of God to know that. But might not he mean, let me have the *two* portions of thy spirit, not only thy communion with God, but let my intellectual sight be opened as thine. Let me also discern the heavenly company

wherewith we are surrounded and commune with "the spirits of just men made perfect," though as yet I only by faith behold the Gospel day?

This, therefore, did seem a hard thing; for, as Elisha was to die like other men, the prophet might not know whether this favour was to be granted to him or not; and, therefore, as referring to the thing itself, he says, (as it were,) "If thou seest me when I am taken from thee," when the spiritual change hath passed upon me, then it shall be so, and then thy inward sight will be opened. But if I become invisible to thee, as to the sons of the prophets who stand afar off to gaze, it shall not be so. It is not the will of God concerning thee. But the "effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availed." Elisha saw both him and his heavenly convoy, while the sons of the prophets saw neither; and, therefore, went on to the mountains to seek Elijah. And that this supernatural sight remained with Elisha, we have reason to believe; for, being in Dothan, and surrounded with a great host come to take away his life, his servant said to him, "Alas, master! what shall we do?" The prophet at once answers, "They are more that be with us, than they that be with them;" and adds, "Lord, open the young man's eyes, that he may see!" And "the Lord opened the young man's eyes, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of chariots and horses of fire round about Elisha." It is remarkable this spirit which rested on Elisha was more conspicuous than that which rested on Elijah,—perhaps to prevent the thought, though the man who was to enter heaven alive was thus favoured, no other must expect it. Nay, but God, who delights to confer his greatest favours on the weakest objects, can confer on us all that which he bestowed on Elijah and Elisha. And, if under that dark dispensation, why not in this Gospel day, concerning which it is foretold, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams?"

The apostle tells us, "We are not come to Mount Sinai," where Israel both saw the power and heard the voice of God; *but to Mount Zion*, where we have communion "with the general assembly of angels, the Church of the first born, the spirits of just men made perfect,

with Jesus the mediator of the new covenant ;" yea, and have access "to God, the judge of all." And were we better acquainted with the privileges of our dispensation, we should become, in a more full manner, inheritors with "the saints in light." But, though it is allowed we may have communion with angels, various are the objections raised against the belief of our communion with that other part of the heavenly family, the disembodied *spirits of the just*.

I shall consider these objections one by one. Lord, help me in so doing ! Let me at least strive to comprehend something of "the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, of the great victory obtained for us over death ;" give me to see a little into that truth, "we are brought from Mount Sinai to Mount Zion."

Objection the first.—If a good spirit loves those which it loved before, and is acquainted with all their proceedings, will not the sins and miseries of those they thus know and love, render them unhappy, or at least mar their happiness in some degree ? I answer, there are two kinds of love. If the persons they loved continue sinners, there will doubtless be a separation of spirit, yet I believe a remembrance and a pity will continue. It is said of the Almighty, that "it repented the Lord he had made man," and that "it grieved him at the heart ;" and again, that "he was grieved with their manners in the wilderness forty years." Nevertheless, his own immutable happiness was not interrupted thereby. Now, as the saints yet on earth are made partakers of the Divine nature, and much more "the spirits of just men made perfect," so I should imagine their happiness would, in that respect, remain as immutable as that of the holy angels did, when so many of their once dear companions they now daily behold as devils. I cannot let it into my thoughts that ignorance makes up any part of celestial glory, or that forgetfulness can be entered into by their nearer approach to Him, "before whom all things are open and manifest ;" and "in whom is no darkness at all."

But, if an entire alienation of affection from the wicked should be needful, that is no proof it is the same with the righteous ; for, if the sins of obstinate sinners would afflict them, the growth of grace in the righteous would augment their joy ; and our Lord himself tells us, "There is joy

in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." If you say, *But this joy is only among the angels*; I answer, Can we suppose those faithful attendants on the heirs of salvation so carefully to conceal this joy within their own bosoms as to exclude the heavenly spirits who stand in a much nearer relation to us? Can we believe they have not all their joys in common? No, no; in the Church of Jerusalem they proved that "great grace was upon them all," by their community of goods. And shall our narrow hearts let in the thought that they have not all their joys in common in the Church above? Yea, verily, "the general assembly of angels, the Church of the first born," and "the spirits of just men made perfect," are but one innumerable company, concerning whom it may well be said,—

"Lift your eyes of faith, and see
 Saints and angels join'd in one!
 What a countless company
 Stands before yon dazzling throne!"

If, then, there is joy throughout all the realms above, yea, "more joy over one sinner that repenteth, than over the ninety and nine which went not astray," how evident it is to an impartial eye, that the state both of the one and the other must be known there, together with the progress of each individual.

Objection the second.—Is not a spirit divested of the body, become of a quite different nature from what it was before, so as to be incapable of the same feelings? I answer, Certainly *no*; the spirit is the *man*. The spirit of my dear husband loved and cared for me, and longed above every other desire for my spiritual advancement. Now, if it were the body, why doth it not love me still? You answer, Because it is dead. That is to say, the spirit is gone from it; therefore, that which loved me is gone from it. And what is that but the spirit, which actuated the body, as the clock-work does the hand which tells the hour? It therefore appears quite clear to me, that every right affection, sentiment, and feeling of mind, we have been exercised in here, will remain in the spirit just the same *immediately after death*. Nevertheless, as with the righteous, heavenly light and love will daily grow stronger, and with the wicked will be an increasing darkness, so there may be, perhaps, in a few days, a

much greater change on the newly glorified spirit, than in the understanding of a child in seven years. The point therefore to be considered is, Will not a continuance and growth in the heavenly state erase those affections and ideas so strongly impressed on the spirit at its first entrance therein? To which I reply, As spiritual union arises from a communication of the love which flows from the heart of Christ, I cannot but believe a nearer approach to its centre, and a fuller measure of that Divine principle, must increase, and not diminish, the union between kindred souls; and that their change will consist, not in the loss, but in the improvement of all that is good.

Whatever agrees with the nature of heaven cannot be destroyed, but increased by their abode therein. Now are not *love* and *gratitude* natives of heaven, which dwell for ever there? If in our present state an abundance of grace is poured out on the soul, what is the effect? Doth it make us forgetful of kindnesses received? Doth it not rather raise the soul to such a pitch of gratitude, that it is ready to see favours where really there are none? And shall not the same love, when perfected in heaven, have the same effect in a more perfect degree? The mistake lies here; we forget that Christian love and union below are the same in *kind*, though not in *degree*, with those above; and we might as well suppose, when we enter into the realms of light, that we shall plunge into darkness for want of the natural sun, as to suppose that Christian love and union must be destroyed by an abode in that kingdom, where the very element we breathe shall be *eternal love*. Doubtless we shall know, and gratefully acknowledge, the ministering spirits who have served us here, and be sensible that gratitude is immortal, and does not change its sentiments with its place. I think all this is clear from those words of our Lord, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail on earth, they," viz., those whom you have helped, "may receive you into everlasting habitations."

Objection the third.—But are they not so taken up with admiring Jesus, as to lose every other affection in him? I answer—That love of Jesus which fills the soul with the admiration of his graces, is a love begotten by that which

reigns in the heart of Christ himself; consequently it is of the same nature. But is the love of Jesus a barren and inactive love? Did it produce in our Lord such an enjoyment of his own pure nature—or such a shutting up in the glories and delights of the Trinity, as to render him forgetful of his creatures? Or did it bring him down to “die for his enemies, and receive gifts for the rebellious?” When a powerful effusion of grace is poured out on our souls, are we not then most willing and ready to help our neighbour, and to cry out with that good woman, Jane Muncy, “Methinks I am all spirit! I have no rest day or night but in gathering souls to God.” Surely, then, we may with safety believe that a holy, unembodied spirit feels the same effect from a fuller effusion of the same love; and that as soon as he hears that word, “I will give thee many things to be faithful over,” he immediately enters more fully than ever *into the joy of his Lord*, which is the joy of doing his creatures good.

Objection the fourth.—But though it may be allowed that the angels are ministering spirits to the saints, in honour of their Lord, who hath taken our nature upon him, we do not know but the spirits of just men made perfect, being of a higher order by their near relation to their Head, may be exempt from that servitude. I answer—To this objection may not those words of our Lord be applied, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of?” “He that will be greatest, let him be servant,” saith Jesus Christ, who came himself “not to be ministered unto, but to minister;” and if our Lord washed our feet, shall we be above the same employment? Jesus, our Master, though in his glorified state, calls himself the “Shepherd of his sheep,” and walks with jealous care amid his “candlesticks of gold, holding the stars in his right hand;” and I can no more believe the divinest spirit in glory above the service of mankind, than I can believe there is pride in heaven. Abraham is represented as receiving Lazarus to his bosom, and as giving a mild answer even to a damned spirit! And when souls at the foot of the altar cried, *How long?* they were told “to wait till their fellow servants came also.” Did they not then remember their fellow servants? When the heart is full of grace, it delights in the meanest office, and feels pleasure in yielding

happiness even to an insect. We are sensible no part of our worship is more pleasant in the sight of God than obedience, and no employment more delightful to the saints than that of promoting the glory of God. Now the Lord hath said of his creatures, "I have created thee for my glory; I have formed thee for my praise!" Shall not then the blessed spirits be very zealous in promoting that glory? The glory of God and our interest are inseparably one. And are they not "one spirit with the Lord?" And is not their highest delight in that in which he most delights, which is the salvation of his people? So that an exemption from serving the Church would rather create pain than give satisfaction.

Again, the highest honour that can be conferred on a creature, is to have the nearest resemblance to its creating Head. Now he hath said to the believer, "I will dwell with you—I will come and make my abode with you." The soul who hath felt a small degree of pure love can answer this objection at once from the feelings of his own heart; the language of which is, *I love him* continually, and therefore *I will feed his lambs*.

Objection the fifth.—But as paradise is a place, as well as a state, and finite beings are not omnipresent any more than omnipotent, how can they be there and here in the same moment? I answer—I do not suppose they can. But if I were to tell you of a minister who daily visited his flock, inquired into all their concerns, and knew their whole situation, would you say it was impossible, because he lives in that house, which is his home, and he cannot be in two places at the same time? And yet it is certain we are perfectly acquainted with the situation of many who do not live with us in the same house. If we see them but once a week, our shallow capacities can take in all they tell us of their past and present state. But if, instead of waiting for the slow and imperfect conveyance of words, we could by a cast of the eye read every thought in a moment, and without labour visit them as easily as the sun shines in at their windows, (though it still remains in its proper place,) our acquaintance would be much more perfect. We are now in the body, and have senses and faculties suited thereto; therefore our human eye can at once measure the body of our child, and discern every

wound or bruise, or even a speck of dirt thereon. And have not spirits faculties suited to spirits, by which we may suppose they can as easily discern your soul, as you could discern their body when they were in the same state as yourself? And may there not be a way by which a spirit actually before the throne of God may still see and serve the souls committed to its care, supposing them to act as ministering spirits?

I ask, If you had never heard of a looking glass, would you understand me if I said, Though you stand at one end of that long gallery, and I at the other, with my back toward you, I can discern your every action and motion, and know every change? And yet such a knowledge the looking glass would convey to me. Now, if all things on earth are patterns or shadows of those above, may not something analogous to the glass represent to the world of spirits as just a picture of the changes of posture in the spirit, as the glass does those of the body? Some have supposed the appearance or representation of every soul still in the body to be constantly seen in heaven. That this may be without the knowledge of the person concerned is evident; because Ananias knew nothing till God said to him, (speaking of Saul,) "Behold, he prayeth; and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight." Various dreams of pious persons, who have thought they saw their appearances in paradise, over which the heavenly company mourned or rejoiced—as well as the amazing instances of second sight—seem to strengthen this opinion.

If this seem strange, let us consider how strange it would appear to us, if we had never heard of letters, to be informed there was a method among many nations of wrapping up their thoughts in a bit of paper, and by that means conveying them hundreds of miles into the bosom of their dearest friends! As little could you conceive of the faculty of speech had you never known it; or the commanding knowledge which the eye gives you over a large space and a number of persons in one moment, had you been born blind. But though I mention these similes, because some can only conceive of spiritual matters by gross ideas, I believe our union to be far more close with

the heavenly host than to need these representations. What else doth those words of the apostle mean, "We are come to the general assembly, to the Church of the first-born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect?" And if "He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire," cannot a spirit be with me in a moment, as easily as a stroke from an electrical machine can convey the fire for many miles in one moment, through thousands of bodies, if properly linked together? That the devils are about us and know our thoughts is evident. A sinful thought is suggested; we answer it by Scripture. Immediately it is answered again. And shall not departed happy spirits, who are so much more of one nature with us, have the same power? Mr. Wesley has a beautiful observation in his sermon on those words, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" He says, "That the guardian angels know our thoughts seems clear from the nature of their charge, which is certainly first for the soul, and but in a secondary sense for the body." And are not our kindred spirits more nearly related to us than the angels? Why then should they not have the same discernment?

But to return to our first question. Can they be here and in paradise at the same time? Otherwise, how can they constantly minister to us? Perhaps we shall not be able to comprehend this till that word is accomplished, "Then shall we know even as also we are known." But if this cannot be, then we must give up all the agency of angels, for the same argument will hold good against that. And yet our Lord hath said, "Despise not these little ones; for I say unto you, in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven."

Objection the sixth.—But is it not said of the dead, "They are gone into the land where all things are forgotten?" And is it not the design of the Almighty that our union should cease with our life, and that death should divide us? As to the first part of the objection, I allow there is in Psalm eighty-eight an expression which implies forgetfulness; but I think it is spoken of the body, which will remain in this state of forgetfulness till reanimated by the spirit. But what has that to do with the soul? We hear of the souls at the foot of the altar,

who cried, "How long, O Lord, till thou judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" And they were told "to rest till their brethren and fellow servants should be slain as they were." Here was a remembrance both of friends and enemies, as also of the manner of their own death. Again, "the four living creatures, and the twenty-four elders" in their song of praise, have these words, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." They are also emblematically represented as having "vials full of incense in their hand, which are the prayers of the saints:" wherewith surely their desires (and consequently remembrance) are joined. Abraham is called the father of the faithful, because of his steadfast belief of the promise concerning Isaac, and is set forth as an example to us. Can we believe him to have forgotten that whole event? Certainly the angel who called to Abraham, and said, "Lay not thy hand on the lad," remembers it; for we cannot suppose him to have passed through any change of nature since that time.

If you say it was the Angel of the covenant, yet doubtless many of the heavenly host were witnesses to that great and typical transaction: and must all the wisdom of God manifested by the Church, as the apostle observes, and "made known thereby to the principalities and powers in heaven,"—must, I say, all the prophecies, types, and revelations, as well as their accomplishment, remain for ever the subject of admiration and praise among the angels, and yet "the spirits of just men made perfect," the subjects for whom, and on whom, all was fulfilled,—must they only be locked up in forgetfulness? Are they with ignorant amazement, to hear Gabriel repeat his conversation with Zechariah? Or does he in vain endeavour to stir up in Mary a remembrance of the salutation she received from the same bright messenger? Shall Moses and Elias only remember the scene on Mount Tabor, while Peter, James, and John remember neither it nor them? If you say, Doubtless every scene relating to the Saviour will be remembered, but we shall not remember or know one another; I answer, The one cannot subsist without the other. If Abraham remembers the type in

Isaac, with the exercise of his faith when "he hoped against hope," he must remember Sarah, the removal of Hagar, with every remarkable circumstance of Isaac's birth. Will it not then be a great lessening of his praise and triumph, if he cannot know whether Isaac and Sarah are with him in glory? If you carry it a little farther, and say, doubtless he knows they are there; then for what cause can he be forbid knowing and conversing with them? Or, is this privilege only granted to Moses and Elias, who, I again say, doubtless knew each other on the holy mount as well as the disciples knew them.

Can we suppose Adam to have a just conception of the incarnation and death of the Messiah, and yet to forget the circumstances of his own fall, which occasioned this gracious union? Must he not then remember Eve, and eternally rejoice to see how *the Seed of the woman has indeed bruised the serpent's head*? The account of the *rich man and Lazarus* alone is sufficient to answer every objection. They could see and know each other, though one was in heaven and the other in hell,—consequently each could see all on earth. Abraham knew the state and situation of both so as to say, *Thou hast had thy good things and Lazarus his evil things*. And the rich man could remember *his five brethren*. If you object and say this was a parable, (which there is no room to assert,) would our adorable Lord put forth a parable full of deceptions and wrong ideas, suited to lead us into error rather than truth? I do not wonder a poor heathen should dream of a river of forgetfulness, by drinking of which all former scenes were to be lost in oblivion: but for a soul enlightened by revelation, to forget that *a day is coming in which every secret thing shall be made known*, is indeed a melancholy proof that *darkness hath covered the earth, and gross darkness the people*.

The second part of the objection we will now consider. Some have alleged, that though it is certain we shall remember and know one another, because without that remembrance many subjects of praise would be lost in oblivion, nevertheless will not all particular unions cease, and is it not the design of God that death should divide? To answer this objection, I must premise, that what is of God shall stand. I plead only for that union which has

God for its source ; and I think it would not be hard to prove, that what God hath joined together, death cannot put asunder. To that question, therefore,—Is it not the design of God that death should divide us ?—I answer, Division comes not from God, but from the devil. God, both in his nature and works, is *perfect unity*, and his original design for our first parents was not sorrow, consequently not separation. If we suppose their friendship was not to have been immortal, we must suppose *pain to be in paradise* ; for Adam could not without pain inform Eve of such an awful secret, that when they had praised God together for a certain time, they must eternally forget each other ! That he should no longer remember he was formed out of the dust, nor Eve her miraculous and near relation to him ! Would not this information have been a bitter draught even in paradise ? Or suppose he had said, Though we shall have a bare remembrance of each transaction, nevertheless that close union, that endearing oneness of soul, of which the *love of God* is the foundation,—that very union hereafter the *love of God* is to dissolve. This would indeed have been in itself exceeding bitter, and therefore never was the original design of love. It was sin that brought in separation. It was owing to the hardness of our heart, for in the beginning it was not so ; for God created one man and one woman. Well may we, therefore, mourn for the separation death occasions ; and our sorrow is countenanced by Jesus himself, who wept over the ravage of this dreadful enemy, when he saw the consequences of it in Martha's and Mary's tears. I allow that it is true most unions on earth are dissolved by death, because the friendships of the world are oft confederacies of vice, or leagues of pleasure ; and few can add,

“ *Ours* hath severest virtue for its basis,
And such a friendship ends not but with life.”

The Christian can say more ; it ends not even with life. In the Church below we are commanded to *love our neighbour as ourselves*, and to consider our fellow Christians as members of one body ; but does this obligation prevent particular unions ? Let that soul be the judge who hath felt most of the love of God and his neighbour. For otherwise, there is, indeed, a love of propriety, or, in other

words, self-love reflected, which purity of heart will remove. But as similitude joins, and dissimilitude separates, so those spirits who are joined by their similitude of love and pure worship, who having been led in one path, (and probably prepared for one mansion,) can as easily retain a peculiar union without any diminution of their love to others, as a married couple can retain their love to each other, notwithstanding they have a dozen children to share it with them. My experience in the love of God is very shallow; yet I have felt enough to satisfy me, that the more our love to God increases, the nearer will be our love to each other, and the more indissoluble the tie; and the stronger this union, the more it will reflect on all around; and turning to its source, the love of Jesus will reflect back again with a perpetually increasing purity.

But I build my strongest argument on those words, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* If death can eternally separate kindred spirits, it hath eternally a sting! And if the grave can eternally retain the body, it would have an eternal victory. But there is a covenant made with our dust. *His elect shall be gathered from the four winds. Bone shall come to its bone,* and not one forget its socket. And shall nothing be lost but our spiritual union? Shall the grand enemy still have that one trophy left to glory in, and to insult over the saints of God? Shall we believe him when he says, "A day is coming in which your closest unions, your purest ties of friendship, shall be no more! All that wonderful chain of providences, in which angels were employed in bringing you together, shall be sunk in eternal oblivion! Indeed this was not the original design of the Almighty; but I have overturned this one great design of love, and that so effectually, that the Saviour himself could not restore it; and instead of having abolished all the consequences of death, it leaves the scar of separation for ever! Now I am the father of death, and have so far conquered, that what God hath in design eternally joined together, I have eternally put assunder!" Ah, no! glory be to our victorious Conqueror! *death shall be for ever swallowed up in complete victory! He hath abolished it,* with all its consequences, and brought life and immortality to light by the

Gospel. He hath broken down the wall, removed the veil; and through him we are come to the Church of the first-born, to the spirits of just men made perfect. We are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God! And having overcome the sharpness of death, he hath already opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Perhaps some may say, But if it be thus, why do not the Scriptures plainly tell us death is no division but on our side; and that our friends still see, hear, and are about us? I answer, There may be many reasons why a veil should be drawn over this heavenly secret. It is probable the primitive Church knew it more perfectly; but what was the consequence? When *they left their first love*, they no longer held the Head, but ran into the false humility of the worship of angels, instead of worshipping God only, and adoring him for the angelic ministry. Perhaps some communion with departed spirits caused the first step into the egregious errors of the Papists; and man, ever prone to extremes, knew not how to throw away the abuse, without throwing away the use of this heavenly secret. Nevertheless, "*The secret of the Lord is still with the righteous, and his ear is open to their prayers. He will manifest himself to them, though not unto the world;*" and he will grant to heavenly minds, when he sees good, a heavenly communication with the Church triumphant.

About this time I had a letter from my brother-in-law, De la Flechere, in Switzerland, letting me know that his son was coming to England, and he wished him to spend some time with me; hoping the sight of the place on which his dear uncle had spent so many years' labour might, with the blessing of God, raise some thoughts in his mind of the importance of a religious life. I laid the matter before the Lord, believing he would order all right; for ever since the removal of my beloved husband, I have so experienced the effects of his last prayer, "Head of the Church, be head to my wife," that I was not permitted to doubt that all concerning me was under the Lord's immediate direction. And though my state was not for the present joyous, yet, through all, I inwardly believed *the hairs of my head were numbered*. Some particular circumstances, however, caused me to think it was the order of God I should go to Bristol, Bath, and some other

places, and that now was the time ; for after my return, it might be that the Lord had something for me to do or to suffer here.

Since my marriage I had travelled a good deal with my dear Mr. Fletcher, and in these journeys had often suffered much through needless fears ; the most predominant passion of my soul by nature. And what, thought I, should such a poor creature as I do with only Sally, and under some disadvantages I had not then ? But still I believed it to be the call of God.

At the time I had appointed to set out, there was an appearance of much snow, which caused my friends to advise me to put off my journey a little longer ; but as this would have deranged some plans, I thought it better to follow the course which I had fixed. When all was ready, and I was waiting for the carriage, I cast my eyes on the Bible which lay open before me, at the thirty-fourth Psalm. Much of it was applied to my heart ; in particular these words : *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.* Faith sprung up in my heart. I said, It shall be fulfilled ; and from that hour I have felt such a change, in regard to fear, as I can give no one an idea of, unless they should have suffered as I have done, from the same infirmity.

All the way as I went through various things, which would once have been very painful, I could feel those words my own which for so many years I had longed after, viz., that "resignation left me no room for fear." No ; "The angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Many providences I met with in my journey, and very clearly did I see the hand of the Lord in various places and things. While I was at Bristol, in the house of my kind and affectionate friend, sister Johnson, I was agreeably surprised with the sight of Mr. H***, who had left his native place, and was just come to settle at Bristol, because he believed it most profitable for his soul. He presented me to his wife, a serious woman, saying, My dear, this is your mother also, for she is mine ; and both assured me of their determination to be entirely devoted to God. As there was something singular in this affair

I will mention the particulars. In the journey which I took with sister Ryan to Clifton, for her health, when I was about the age of twenty-seven, we lodged in a house where the family were very ungodly. There was only my sick friend, myself, and the nurse; and our whole apartments consisted of two chambers. After we had been there two or three days, we observed some things which we did not like very well. One night there was a strange noise below stairs, as of very rattling, wild company. It may be supposed it did not well agree with my sorrowful heart; for at that season I had nothing to expect (humanly speaking) but to bury my dear friend there, or carry her back in a coffin,—only she had various promises to the contrary, which sometimes I believed, and sometimes doubted. On inquiring next morning, they informed us that “Mr. H*** was come, and now they should be all alive.” I had before asked the family (who did not appear to be persons of the best character) if they would choose to come up into my room in the morning to family prayer, as they were only women? But they never, as I remember, accepted the invitation. However, some days after the above mentioned racket, they sent me word, “If I pleased, Mr. H*** and themselves would wait on me to prayer the next morning.” I did not dare to refuse, and answered they were welcome. God only knew what a cross I felt in so doing! I had all the reason that could be, to think they only wanted to divert themselves; and the receiving a wild young gentleman, with such gay ladies, into my bedchamber, seemed to me a strange enterprise. The chapter I chose to read was the twenty-fifth of Matthew. I spoke with freedom on each of the parables, and found *God was with my mouth*. I did not much look off the book, till about the middle of the parable of the talents, I cast my eyes toward Mr. H***, and was surprised to find his earnestly fixed on me, and swimming with tears. When prayer was over, he respectfully returned me thanks, and went down stairs. After attending three mornings, he stopped behind the family, and told me, when they were gone, that he was convinced he had led a bad life, and he wished to learn how to do better; that he was free from all business, had a good fortune, and was only here accidentally; and

if I would tell him where he could get instruction, and help for his soul, he would go any where; "for this house," said he, "I must leave." From the first morning there was no more noise, singing, breaking glasses, or rude behaviour of any kind. As my friend grew worse, we were desired to leave Clifton, and try Bath. There she recovered to admiration; and in a short time we returned to the orphan house at Laytonstone. Mr. H*** made good his words; and cultivating the friendship of some pious persons whom we had recommended to him in London, particularly brother George Clark, he became much confirmed in the truth; and hath ever since remained a follower thereof, and a promoter of the prosperity of Zion. At Bristol also I met with poor Fanny,* much grown in grace, and adorning her profession. And after a month's absence, I was brought again in peace to Madeley, and constrained to say,

"In all my ways his hand I own;
His ruling providence I see."

I now found my dear love's relations in Switzerland laid greatly on my mind in prayer; and sometimes when engaged therein, it has seemed to me as if his dear spirit so joined with me as I cannot express; and for his nephew in particular, whom I expected, I was greatly drawn out in intercession.

Being poorly one Saturday night, about ten o'clock, (the last week in May,) I was about retiring to bed, when word was brought me that my nephew was arrived. He could speak but little English, and I but little French. This was the first I had seen of my dear husband's relations. He was of his own name, his godson, and his only nephew. But alas! I now received him alone, and instead of showing him his dear uncle, and sweet instructor, I could only lead him to the silent tomb, and say, "Live as he lived, and thou shalt die as he died."

I found him, as I expected, quite carnal, and very averse to the things of God. As my spirits were very weak, and his pretty high, I wished to have him rather as a visiter than one of my family; and Providence so appointed for me. Mr. Horne, the curate, understanding French,

* The Jewess mentioned in the former visit.

kindly offered to receive him into his house, until he was more perfect in the English language. I soon discovered he was of a sweet temper, a fine understanding, and outwardly very moral; but withal a strong Deist; and as he delighted much in philosophy, he placed such confidence therein as to believe he could set us all right, if he might have but five hours' dispute with us.

I inquired of the Lord concerning the method I should use toward him; and saw, for the present, I was only called to show him condescension and love—to consider myself as his servant in Christ, and therefore to stand always ready to take up my cross, and in every thing innocent to do his will rather than my own. And as I could not say much to him in words, I must the more endeavour to show him, by the example of myself and family, that religion justly bears the character given her in those words:—

“Mild, sweet, serene and tender is her mode,
Nor grave with sternness, nor with lightness free:
Against example resolutely good;
Fervent in zeal and warm in charity.”

It appeared to me as if those four lines were given me as a direction which I must ever keep before my eyes. And much did I plead with the Lord, that nothing he saw in me, or mine, might tend to set him farther off from God. When we could converse in English with tolerable ease, I perceived he had not only imbibed many wrong sentiments, but had such a stock of Pharisaical righteousness as I scarcely ever met with before.

One day, as he was talking in his free way, about the truths of the Gospel, a friend said, “If your aunt hears you talk at this rate she will be much grieved.” He replied, “But I will not say these things to her; though should my aunt talk much to me about religion, I fear I shall not keep my temper: for my uncle drove many people mad when he was abroad. I do believe there were three hundred who were quite mad! They talked of being filled with love, and kept praying and running together, not only while he was there, but since that time also.”

Hearing of this, I said, “Tell him I will promise to keep my temper whether he does or not, for my love to him has a better foundation than he can shake.” In

order to improve in the English language, he proposed to read to me some hours in a day ; and I was to choose the books. Mr. Wesley was so kind as to send him Beatty's Evidences of the Christian Religion, which he read with some pleasure : but as yet his heart remained untouched.

I was very conscious I had none of that wisdom which in cases of this kind is often very useful ; and where it is joined with Divine unction, does beautifully illustrate the truths it endeavours to defend. But that word was remembered with pleasure, "I will choose the foolish things of the world to confound the wisdom of the wise." And again, "My strength shall be made perfect in weakness."

Well, thought I, if I have no philosophical arguments to bring, I will so much the more cry to the strong for strength. I cannot do with *the armour I have not proved* : but the *stone* of conviction, and the *sling* of faith, is that which I must depend on ; and when these are directed by the Spirit of God, nothing can stand against them.

Many of the Protestants in Switzerland are Deists ; they are nevertheless very strict in bringing the young people to the communion ; and they esteem it a reproach to do otherwise. My nephew expressed a desire of joining with us in that mean of grace ; for having been from home some years at the university, he had not yet been brought to the table. Mr. Horne told him freely his scruples in receiving him as a communicant ; but after much conversation, he perceived a degree of conviction, and a desire to know the truth, and consented to admit him.

The first time he came to the table, as he was kneeling beside me, and Mr. Horne was speaking those words, "The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee"—I found such a power of prayer spring up in my heart, it seemed as if I claimed a ray of the Divinity just then to penetrate his soul. He hath since told me he felt something very particular at that moment. My greatest difficulty, however, lay here, he did not believe the Scriptures. I was therefore cut off from drawing any arguments from them, and could only hold to this, the necessity of a change, in order to be capable of enjoying the Supreme Being.

I observed to him, You believe heaven to be a state, and a place of holiness, and the happiness there to be separate from all sin ;—is there not then an absolute need of having a disposition suited thereto ?—This he readily allowed ; but added, “ Then I will make myself this new creature. The Supreme Being hath not left his work imperfect. He hath given me powers sufficient, if I do but use them ; and if I am to do all by this grace of God, as you say, then what has God to thank me for ? ” I endeavoured to convince him of our utter helplessness, except through that assistance which we draw from union with God through the Saviour, without whom we cannot do any thing. He replied, “ Indeed, aunt, that is not my ease. I do not know how it may be with others, but for me, I do assure you, there is no snare I cannot avoid, nor any passion I cannot overcome.”

As he abhorred the doctrine of the fall as much as that of the Divinity of our Lord, I did not speak often on those heads. I sought rather to convince him he was fallen, whether through Adam, or any other way, and that he was a sinner and unfit for heaven : and narrowly did I watch for every opportunity of pointing out any disposition that would help to prove my argument, though it was very difficult to bring him to a consciousness of any. At last I observed he had an abhorrence of the sin of envy, and a sensibility of having felt it. I then, on every proper occasion, enlarged on the happiness of the blessed, as consisting in love, the very contrary to selfishness, which was the principle from which envy took its life ; and therefore he must become a new creature to enter into that state. This he now began to see, and sometimes to feel ; but all my hopes appeared to be overturned at once by a circumstance which occurred. He had fixed his affections on a lady from whom about this time he thought he received some encouragement. Elated with joy, he was carried out of himself ! There was nothing left for me to take hold of. He had no ear to hear but on one subject. I returned to a silent waiting before the Lord.

One night about the beginning of November, I dreamed I was in a church, standing by a communion table, on which lay a large Common Prayer Book, open in the

service of matrimony. I observed it was all marked, as my dear husband used to mark those books he much approved. I beheld it with pleasure, for being near the 12th of November, I took it as a token that he remembered with approbation the transaction of that day,—our marriage. I was conscious of the presence of his dear spirit, as sent to communicate something to me. As I looked on the book, he signified to me the whole was emblematic, though few entered into the spirituality of it: adding, "This is a great mystery: I speak concerning Christ and the Church." As I cast my eyes on that word, "Who giveth this woman to this man?" he pointed me to that text, "None cometh to the Son but whom the Father draweth." As nothing was spoken in words, it is difficult to describe the ideas which were conveyed to my mind. A gleam of light seemed to break forth in my soul, by which I discovered in how full a sense the souls of the redeemed are given by the Father to the Son, as his bride! I then thought on those words, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." In this acceptable moment, my nephew came to my mind. I said with a groan, O for our nephew! Immediately I saw a little bird fly around and around. I said, That is the emblem of my nephew's spirit. If it come to me and I take it up, his soul will be given unto me. I had no sooner spoken the word, but it came and alighted on the table before me. I took it up, stroked it, and let it fly again. A thought then struck my mind,—O, but he does not believe the Scriptures! The bird came, and I took it up the second time. As it flew again, I thought, O, but he does not believe in the Divinity of our Lord! Immediately it returned, and I took it up a third time. I no more saw it flying, but a beautiful large bird stood with great solemnity before me, and I awoke.

As I was in prayer a little time after the above dream, these words bore on my mind, "He setteth the solitary in families, and maketh them households as a flock of sheep." Also, "Thy sons shall come from far; and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side." It was on the Monday night I had the dream here related; and on the following Friday, my nephew received a flat denial from the before-mentioned lady. Here all his philosophy and

boasted reason failed. He was as one driven to desperation. The next night he told me all his heart, saying, "O aunt! if you could see into my breast, you would see how troubled I am for the pain I have caused you. But now I see you are in the right. No! we cannot do without the help of God. I thought I could conquer every passion, but now I find they are taller and bigger than I." After telling me how many trials and disappointments he had met with in life, he added, "Do, dear aunt, pray with me." I did so, he weeping all the time with groans. When we rose from our knees, he said, "Ah! I am in the wrong, I thought all religion stood in the abhorrence of outward evil! but now I see there is something more." I told him my dream: when I came to that part of it relating to himself, he was much moved, and said, "O, aunt, if it depend on me, it shall be accomplished, indeed it shall."

The next morning, he told me that after we had parted the last night, as he was striving to pray, he found all his troubles gone, and felt for a few moments such a tranquillity as he had never known before. But his trouble, as well as his reluctance to believe, returned again; yet with this difference,—he had now a consciousness that he was wrong, and expressed a great desire to know and embrace the truth.

From some concurring circumstances, I believed it to be the order of God to invite him to live with me the remainder of the time he had to stay in England; but remembering what a friend had said, "I cannot converse with him any more; he tears open all the wounds of unbelief;"—I said, "Lord, shall it be so with me?" and was answered by the application of that word to my mind, "I will not send you a warfare at your own charges." And glory be to my adorable Lord, so it proved; for all he could say served but to light up a fresh candle in my soul! Every time I read the Scriptures, a new lustre shone on every part, and the Divine evidence rose higher and higher in my heart. I could now observe he heard with deep attention; and one day he said to me, "Aunt, it is not now that I *will not* believe, but that I *cannot*; for when you read the chapter night and morning, and tell your thoughts upon it, it seems unanswerable. But then

something comes—some thoughts,—I do not seek them, but they come and throw me all back again.”

His state was now very uncomfortable. Sometimes he was just ready to receive the Scriptures as truth: then a variety of objections would start up in his mind, and cause him to cry out, “How can these things be?” If we cannot be saved without believing that Jesus is God, why did he live and die in such obscurity? Would not a merciful Being have rendered every thing quite clear that he required his creatures to believe, upon pain of their salvation? He added many arguments frequently used by Deists, such as, “How clearly doth the whole creation prove a Supreme Creator! The day and night, the sun and moon, and all creatures! We cannot help believing they have a Maker. Why is not the Divinity of Jesus Christ made as easy to be believed as these things?” I replied, the belief of those things you have mentioned, are by the outward senses; but religion is an inward principle, which God must open in our souls, and which changes every power and passion thereof. If all you are to believe could be comprehended by the outward senses, the greatest sinners might be as good believers as the most holy persons. But the sense which God opens in the soul, and which we call faith, makes you acquainted with spiritual things, and capable of communion with God. He then answered in haste, “God hath never opened such a sense in my soul, and of course he will not condemn me for not using a power he hath not given.” True (said I) it is not opened in you; but it is because you shut your eyes and heart against it. Your state is exactly descried in the word of God, whether you will believe it or no. This same Jesus whom you have despised, was “to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the wise Greeks foolishness; but to us who believe,” we feel him to be “the wisdom of God, and the power of God.”

It was a precious time to my own soul; I had such a sweet view of the whole plan of redemption! A ray of light shone upon the amazing wisdom, as well as love, contained therein, and filled my heart with a sweet liberty,

* The God of infinite mercy, justice, and truth, has made all clear. The evidences of his being are not stronger than the evidences of the religion he has revealed.—ED.

while I was attempting to lay before him the hidden glories of the adorable Jesus, when he appeared without form or comeliness, and by his deep humiliation marked out all our way ! How well suited this plan of salvation was to break down the high aspiring thoughts of man, and to bring him into that absolute dependence, and perfect submission, which make the joys of heaven ! I observed also, that a far greater salvation was wrought out for us, and a far greater glory would redound to God, by this wonderful act of free grace, than could have been if we had never needed such a Saviour.

I now daily discerned some advances—he gave back more and more ; and the word of God began to be more honourable in his eyes. But yet he would say, “Every man hath the right of private judgment. Can I not be saved without believing on Jesus Christ ? If I address my prayers to the Supreme Being, and strive to obey him, why should I be condemned for not believing what I cannot understand ?” To this I answered, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that all who believe on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Now, said I, there is the condition : “If you believe on him whom the Father hath given.” He seemed in a struggle to believe, and said with vehemence, “But I cannot believe God would become a man, and die for me. I am not worthy of it. The thought is absurd ! Why, aunt, if I were condemned to death, do you believe the king of England would die to save my life ?” No, said I, I believe he would not. “Now, there is the thing,” replied he,—“you start at the thought of the king dying for me ; and yet you want me to believe that God hath died in my place !”*

I observed the different relation he stood in to God. The king (said I) did not create you ; you are not his offspring ; neither can the love of a finite being bear any comparison with that pure unmixed love which dwells in the heart of God. The king did not voluntarily take all your condemnation on himself. But the Almighty Saviour has done so. He acts by us as if some great potentate should receive into his favour a poor beggar—make her

What a genuine instance of carnal reasoning !—Ed.

his spouse—*take all her debts on himself*—give her a right to his treasures—a part in his throne—and a share in all his titles. “Thus God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him,” should by virtue of that union inherit all things! Here is the condition; but you will not comply therewith. Only suppose, for one moment, that the king had died to save your life; but that when you was informed of his unparalleled love, you would give no credit thereto, even though one should say to you, Only look through this glass in my hand: I hold it to your eye; only look through it, and you will see him hang bleeding there! But you turn away your face with contempt, and will not so much as look on him who bleeds for you! Would you not in that case be a monster of ingratitude? Now this word of God, this book, is the glass; if with simplicity and prayer you look into it, you shall there discern *that* supreme Being, (whom unknown you worship,) and that “He was in Christ reconciling the world to himself: and that there is no other name given under heaven whereby you can be saved.”

One afternoon, as he was reading to me, I pointed him to the experience of Brother Story, believing it was suited to his present state. But contrary to all I had for a long time seen in him, he appeared quite hard, and cavilled at almost every sentence. I answered his objections for a long time, till I was quite spent. Then looking solemnly at him, with tears in my eyes, I put out my hand to take the book. He was moved, and said tenderly—“What, aunt! What! No! I will read any thing, any thing you give me! You think me in a bad spirit, aunt!” I replied, Why, my dear, I do not think you are in a very good one. That book does not suit you to-night. He then read on, till he came to a part very applicable to his present feelings. He dropped the book at once, and remained silent. After a time I asked him what was the matter. He replied, “I know not what is the matter! I feel a horrible sensation! O! what do I ail? How have I been speaking to you! Dear aunt, the more kind you are, the more ungrateful I am. What is the matter with me? I am worse and worse!” I strove to comfort him, saying, It is well; the Lord is beginning to show you your heart. “Ah!” replied he, “you say very well, but I say very ill;

for I am worse than before I came to England. O! I am ashamed to think how I spent my life! I thought I had done all things for the glory of God. But now I see I have done all for myself, and to please myself only." After some time of silence, he said, "I will now tell you what I have been doing. All this week I have strove to address my prayers to Jesus Christ, as you advised me, but, alas! I am more dull and cold in them than I ever felt before! O! if he is God, why doth he not help me! You said, aunt, he would answer for himself!" Then in an agony he added, "Why does he not answer? Why does he not answer?" While I was making a few observations on the long time the Lord had waited for him, &c., Mr. Horne came in to meet the men's class, to which he was that night to go up for the first time. When he came down, he said his mind was more composed, and he wished he had frequented that meeting before.

After supper, being alone, we renewed our conversation, and I repeatedly assured him the Lord would shine upon him if he would only persevere. His cry was still, "Why does he not answer?" It being late, we parted. I then went again to the throne of grace, to pour out my complaint before the Lord. I saw we were come to a point, and could go no farther without his immediate help. I had staked all on the faithfulness of my God, and had declared the answer would come: and now there was nothing more for me to do, but to obtain it of the Almighty. Sometimes I felt all faith and hope; at others, as if cold water was thrown over the fire of expectation. Satan was not idle. He suggested, You will find him to-morrow as you left him to-night. I pleaded with the Lord that it was no new thing I asked. He had shown his approval of sacrifices by fire from heaven; he had wrought for his people; he had given signs and wonders! "His arm was not shortened," and I besought him to appear in such a manner for this young man, as should convince him of the truth. Sometimes I felt all discouragement, but I did not mind that; I knew from whence it came. I said, Lord, thy word stands always sure; it is not my feelings, but thy faithfulness, that I depend on. Lord, thou hast said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, I will do it." I ask this in thy name! I leave it in thy hand.

assured of the answer. The next morning he went out early. On his return at night, he said, "Aunt, I have a great deal to tell you. After we parted last night I thought I would pray; but that it was right to consider what I wanted most. Then I thought, why I want most light on this point, about Jesus Christ. But will God so condescend as to answer me? Then, aunt, I heard a voice (not with my ear, but I did hear it) say, Yes, he will. Then I began and made prayer—and an hour went away like a minute—and I could say, *Through the Lord Jesus Christ!* O! dear aunt, I thought I must have come up and told you, but you were gone to bed. And again I thought, may be to-morrow God will confirm this. And so he has, for when I was at Waters Upton, Mr. G. H. began to make pleasantries of the miracles of Jesus Christ. I said in myself, Yesterday I could have smiled at this, and heard it with pleasure; but now it was a horrible sensation; I could not bear it; I was forced to go out of the house. Was not that a sign, aunt, that there is some change in me?"

Soon after he had a particular dream. He thought he was in Switzerland, and attempting to converse with one of his old acquaintances on the things of God; but was much surprised to find he could only speak in English. Afterward, as he stood at a window with his father, he saw eight full moons all at once, and said in his mind, It means eight months. A beautiful city then rose up before his eyes, and as he looked thereon, he beheld a lovely appearance, and thought, Is that St. John? He looked, till dazzled with the beams of glory which surrounded the face as it passed over the city, he cried out, See! father, see! The Lord Jesus! The Lord Jesus! and so awoke. This dream seemed to make a deep impression on him, though he attempted no explanation. About a week after this, coming home one night late, from visiting a sick neighbour, on my inquiring after his state, he answered, "Aunt, I have not found the evening long, for I have been in deep recollection almost all the time you have been gone. And now I can say, 'Faith is the evidence of things unseen,' for if I had seen my Lord, I could not be more assured than I am." From this time the change has been more and more evident. He attends all the meetings with

me, and our dear friends are not a little delighted to hear the nephew and godson of their beloved minister telling, in his broken English, that his eyes, which had long been accustomed to see darkness, do now behold the light of the Lord.

Some time after, writing to a friend, he uses these words: "I have altogether left Mr. Horne's house, though fully satisfied with all there; but it would have been very disagreeable to me to have been forced to ride daily, and at night, over one of the worst roads in the kingdom. I have now for three months enjoyed the happiness of living with my aunt, and I feel more and more the immense obligation which I owe to her, not only for all the temporal care she hath taken for me, but much more for the blessing of my soul. Yes, she hath shown me, clearly, that the knowledge of mathematics, and a vain philosophy, are not sufficient to procure us true happiness; but the knowledge of Him only who giveth wisdom liberally to those who ask it. She hath taught me to distinguish the things which are situated within the reach of our understanding, from those which are beyond it; for I must own that the idea which I had before of the strength of my understanding, and the extent of my knowledge, was so false, that I thought nothing to be out of my sphere. But now, blessed be God! not only I feel that it is not permitted to men to scrutinize with profane looks the mysteries of religion, but I believe them with a holy respect; and far from being ashamed to acknowledge Jesus for my Saviour, I set my glory in it, and that persuasion makes me happy!"

He is indeed a new creature; and his conscience appears to be so tender, and his convictions of the need of a farther change so strong, that I am sunk in amazement and wonder! O what a prayer-hearing God have we to do with! "Ask, and you shall receive," is more than ever written on my heart! On the first of January, he was much blessed, and told me he had found such a power to renew his covenant with the Lord as he had never done before. He broke out in prayer with such simplicity as delighted the whole congregation! In a few months he must leave me and return to Switzerland—I trust in the power of the Lord, to be a messenger of glad tidings to the dear family of his precious uncle. O my God! what

hast thou done for thy poor worm in the day of her adversity! "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name!"

PART THE SIXTH.

HER RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AT MADELEY.

December 3, 1785.

LAST night I had a peculiar sense of that truth, "Thy Maker is thy husband!" I saw great depth in that declaration. The thought of belonging only to Jesus was precious! These words were powerfully on my mind:—

"Be bold in Jesus to confide,
His creature, and his spotless bride!
Thy husband's power and goodness prove.
The Holy One of Israel he!
The Lord of hosts hath chosen thee,
In faith, and holiness, and love!"

I saw and felt all things are possible to persevering faith; but in the midst of this exercise my old temptation presented, Thou art not in joy! And some say, "No more holiness than joy." It was as cold water cast on a fire. My feeble sore spirit trembled under the suggestion, and sorrow's waves around me rolled! I said, true, I have not joy! Again it came to my mind, others believe because an overflowing power constrains them so to do; but I believe, as it were, because I will believe.* Yet I thought, is not that the way of faith? Ought I not to hang on Jesus in the midst of the fire? What is "the abiding in the secret place of the Most High?" Is it not taking shelter in Jesus, and keeping fixed there, whatever storms may surround? I cried to the Lord, and sometimes the faith of Abraham was set before me. These words of our Lord were also applied, "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." But still the weight hung

* So must they in the hour of temptation.—Ed.

over my soul. At night I went to bed oppressed, yet struggling to maintain that faith which "staggers not at the promise," but gives glory to God by believing.

I dreamed I was in a room with Sally, and saw a picture, or rather the ground work for a picture, on which was only painted one small sheep lying down; the rest was all plain. I said to her, Sally, look on that picture, and what the Lord says, your dear master will draw it out for me to read? I then saw letter by letter come out, as if wrote, (though without any hand or pen,) as follows: "She that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." I felt it a confirmation of my faith; and said, there is no better path than to repose the soul in God, and to go on in quiet resignation, whatever we may feel. As I was making that reflection, I heard, though yet asleep, my dear husband's voice, as if close to my face, speaking these words,—

"Shout, all ye people of the sky!
And all ye saints of the Most High:
Our God, who thus his right obtains,
For ever and for ever reigns!"

The beginning I heard in my sleep, but as it waked me, the rest was heard afterward: and I could have known his voice among a thousand. I saw from it we never render to God his right till we abandon, by a perfect resignation, all our concerns, spiritual as well as temporal, into his hand, and learn to lie still before him, in the posture of a little child, hanging each moment by faith on his mercy. I see how the art of Satan has hindered me. Indeed my present state is not joyous. I feel, *keenly feel*, my loss! I am as a poor sheep alone on the mountains. I feel a sorrow no pen can describe. I am penetrated with fiery darts, and my health so broken, my nerves so weak; with a variety of trying affairs which quite weigh me down. But this morning, the Lord showed me, I was not to set joy as the mark,* but a ready submission and quiet resignation to his will. That I was to fix this on my mind, "Whoso trusteth in the Lord shall never be

* It is a real part of the "kingdom of God," Rom. xvii, 14, but not sensibly discerned while the believer is "sifted as wheat."—Ed.

confounded." That I was to lie still as clay in his hand, that he in his wisdom and love might save me in the way that he knew. My only care should be, to embrace the cross with a ready will !

February 6, 1786.—My soul is waiting on the Lord. I believe he will bring me into his unclouded presence ! I do feel the truth of these words,—

"They shall, as their right, his righteousness claim."

I also feel that,

"I shall, as my right, his purity claim."

I do claim it, and feel a share therein. He keeps me ; I know "He that abideth in me sinneth not." My soul doth abide, looking by faith to Jesus ; and I do not feel any sin ; yet my sorrow and mourning is deep. I also feel sore temptation ; not to any thing earthly of any kind. No, I believe "the world is crucified to me," and I "unto the world !" It has no charms for me ; but I am tempted with great terrors, which come over my mind in a moment, and my weak nerves, which have been affected even to a degree of palsy, help to let in the temptations. At times the Lord Jesus gives me such a view of his faithfulness and full power to save, that I seem to forget for a few moments all my sorrow ! This is the case often ; but then the vision shuts again, and grievous temptations return. I want a full liberty, such as was given at the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of pentecost. I believe there is a degree of union which shuts out all sorrow,*—the soul having so entered into the element of love, as to be incapable of receiving any idea but what is consonant therewith, or in other words, a "dwelling in God," and possessing the fulness of that promise, "I and my Father will come and make our abode with you."

February 16.—I found to-day some refreshment in conversing with that dear old saint, Mary Matthews, one of my dear love's first children, who endured much persecution for the truth's sake many years since. She was called under the first sermon she heard him preach ; and after feeling the spirit of bondage nearly two years, was

* No ; our Lord was a *man of sorrows*. But all rebellious sorrow we may be saved from.—Ed.

very clearly set at liberty, and walked many years in faith and love. It was she who was so blessed the first Sabbath my dear husband introduced me into the kitchen among those who met there; and she has enjoyed a fuller liberty ever since. She told me, that on the day after the preaching in the last week, having undertaken to open the door in time for the morning service, she took the key of the room for that purpose, and believed the Lord would awake her in time. About two in the morning (instead of five) she was awaked with an extraordinary power of God. She thought, I must rise and pray. She came down and broke up the fire, and being in a little house all alone, she sat down to meditate, and give full scope to the Spirit. She took up her hymn book, but could not read; for, said she, "All around me seemed God! It appeared to me as if the room was full of heavenly spirits. I laid the book down, and falling back in my chair, I remembered no more of any thing outward, but thought I was at the threshold of a most beautiful place. I could just look in. The first thing I saw was the Lord Jesus sitting on a throne! There was a beautiful crown over his head! It did not seem to bear with a weight, but as if it was suspended there, and as he turned his head, it turned with him. A glorious light appeared on one side, and all around him was glory! I thought on that word of St. Paul,—*Who dwelleth in light unapproachable!* Turning my eye a little, I saw close to my Saviour my dear minister, Mr. Fletcher! He looked continually on the Lord Jesus with a sweet smile. But he had a very different appearance from what he had when in the body; and yet there was such an exact resemblance that I could have known him among a thousand! Features and limbs just the same, but not of flesh. It was what I cannot describe, all light! I know not what to call it! I never saw any thing like it. It was, I thought, such a body as could go thousands of miles in a moment.* There were several passed who had the same appearance; and I seemed to have lost my old weak, shaking body! I seemed to myself as if I could have gone to the world's end as light as air! I looked on him

* What a description! Far beyond her powers.—Ed.

a long time, and observed every feature with its old likeness. He then turned his eyes on me, and held out his hand to me just as he used to do. After this the whole disappeared, and I came to myself, and found it was just the time when I should open the preaching house door." I found her words a comfort to me.* Ah! my dear husband was a suffering member here; but he is now a bright star in glory.

I am amazed to see how the Almighty appears for me in outward things. Night and day I have a sense of safety. I feel as if the angels of the Lord encamped around about me! Though we are alone, I and the two girls in this house, sometimes only Sally and I, no long winter night seems to have any thing dreary to me! Indeed life and death are equal, the will of God is all! I feel also a quiet acquiescence in the will of God. His will shall be my choice! I have no other rest on earth. Yet I have not joy! But I will lie in his hands for this also.

Some thoughts have arisen in my mind on this subject. There has long been a question between two sorts of religious professors, both devoted to God. The one part say, "A child of God, labouring up perfection's hill, may be in darkness and obscurity for a time, in order to his farther purification." The others say, "Nay, there can be no darkness but from the displeasure of God! neither is there any true holiness but in proportion to this joy."

But what do we mean by darkness? And what do we mean by joy? Many blend the idea of darkness with deadness. They suppose such to have no savour of Divine things. They do not mourn after Jesus, *as one who mourns for her first-born*. They can be content with worldly rest. They look more to men and means for help than singly to Jesus. They are indeed pained sometimes because they have no more life; but their treasure is still here. *Such* darkness certainly the true believer does not feel. The experience of Mr. Brainerd is a fine comment on this. A soul thirsting (in general) after the

* How wonderful are the ways of God! Instead of that "joy unspeakable, and full of glory," which this devoted woman so earnestly desired, he took this way to comfort her! And what a mystery of love even in this that he should give it to her, not directly, but at second hand!—Ed.

full mind of Christ,—whose conscience is truly tender, to whom the world is crucified, and who has no relish but for the things of another life,—whose eye is really fixed, “not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen;”—to whom the prospect of a nearly approaching death is pleasant, from a firm confidence of final salvation, though that confidence may be oft assaulted; and who feels an intense, though mournful desire after the whole mind of Christ,—and an abiding filial fear of offending God. Such a soul may find sometimes great obscurity, as if its Saviour was hidden—as if the Lord shut himself up within stone walls, which prayer could not pass through;—so that even strong supplication and prayer shall seem to feel resistance. As when Jacob wrestled with the angel, it seemed as if he wanted to get loose from Jacob’s grasp, without giving him the blessing. As when our Lord gave that (seemingly) harsh answer to the Canaanitish woman, “It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and give it unto dogs!” Was it to discourage and drive her back? Was it from wrath he spoke? Ah, no! It was to try and to strengthen her faith by exercise; and to increase her blessing, when he pronounced that word, “O woman, great is thy faith! be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” We have often a wrong idea of faith. When the apostle says, “I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith,”—how do we understand him? Some say, “He fought against sin,—he was firm in persecution,—and he always believed. His soul was so full of light and power that he could not help believing.” Was there then no conflict in believing? When St. Paul says, *Cast not away your confidence*, does he mean that they could not cast it away? Were they to hold it fast, when it needed no holding? And is it thus that it should have *great recompense of reward*?

But does not the whole tenor of Scripture speak of the Christian soldier as “fighting the fight of faith?” And what is faith, but “the believing of things unseen?” “Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.” And to Nathaniel, our Lord says, “Because I said, Under the fig tree I saw thee, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.”

It seems to me, therefore, that the way of holiness is

to strive every moment to "look unto Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith; and while the soul is so continually hanging on him, let it not esteem it a *strange thing*, if it should feel the powers of darkness surround it, inducing horror and dismay! If the believer feel as though the Angel of the covenant struggled against him; as if he would go away and leave the soul unblessed. It may seem to have even a rebuke instead of a blessing, like the Canaanitish woman; nay, it may feel as if all its strength was failing, so that it could wrestle no longer. Perhaps the day begins to break! Death seems at the door! and the fainting soul cries out, O, what is all my wrestling come to! My day of grace is gone, and I am not saved! But the very next moment may bring the "new name of Israel! As a prince thou hast power with God, and hast prevailed."

June 19.—I now see clearly what I want. My soul is not brought fully into the element of love. There is a fulness of love, or, "a perfect love, which casts out all fear." I have not perfect resignation; yet my will never seems to oppose God. I have not perfect peace; it is disturbed by temptation. I have not perfect union with God; clouds come between. In short, that salvation I felt at Hoxton, and which I now feel, is like Israel when on the borders of Canaan. But I am not put in full possession. I do not *dwell in love*. I am determined, however, never to rest short of it; and I believe that is the meaning of the promise so impressed upon my mind, "An abundant entrance shall be ministered unto you into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ." Lord, hasten the hour! I have no hope but from thee. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy! Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts!"

Well,—if I am thus perfectly saved, I shall be the greatest monument of mercy! for since that time I was blessed at Hoxton, how often have I sunk back from that liberty of faith! and though the Divine change has ever since remained on my soul, yet there have been times in which I have been a monster in my own eyes, for I have many times found *self*, and from that root every evil springing up in my soul.

I would give a list of the evils I have felt, but, alas ! when I attempt it, I am lost ! I cannot find any words to express myself in. But this I will say, for the comfort of some who have known these things, and into whose hands this account may fall, that wherein they have lamented their inbred corruption, I have much more cause for lamentation.

O ! if I were but for one hour permitted to enter heaven, that I might throw myself at the feet of all whom I have offended, or hindered, by my pride, self-will, and other evils, it would yield me some consolation. Yet I believe I shall be delivered from them all, and even from this painful reflection. Yes, I shall ; the God of love hath said, "Thou shalt walk with me in white—I will make thee worthy !" And my soul has of late felt a great renewal of that promise. Yes, I shall overcome ! I begin though but faintly, to shout victory ! I shall overcome ! for I singly trust in Jesus.

Friday, June 23.—Three days ago, as I was thinking of the above words, "I am not brought into the element of love," a thought came into my mind. Thou waitest and pleadest to be brought into another state :—Abide in Jesus ! That is the way to love, and to bring forth all good fruit. I weighed it over in my mind, and saw that it was so. I have Jesus ! and have I not all in him ? Those words shone with light on my heart, "Christ is made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." I felt I ought to rejoice in my privilege ; the privileges of my present dispensation. I am brought into a state of love ; and that I do not abundantly grow therein is because I do not abide every moment in a quiet, peaceable confidence, believing the Lord will enable me to glorify him in and through every thing. These words were yesterday, and are still, the language of my soul,—

"No condemnation now I dread,
 Jesus and all in him is mine ;
 Alive in him, my living head,
 And just in righteousness Divine,
 Bold I approach th' eternal throne,
 And claim the crown through Christ my own."

Friday, July 21.—O, the union my spirit feels with my

dear husband! Time makes no difference to me. As I was offering up my trials to the Lord to-day, these words came to my mind, "Ask of the Lord grace to suffer as much, and as long as he pleases." I thought, so I will, I will not even wish to have it mitigated.

Saturday, July 22.—Yesterday I was at the chapel in Madeley Wood, and found much freedom of spirit while speaking on these words, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name." This morning I feel my soul cast on the Lord, and was blessed in reading those words of Fenelon, "Your letter leaves me nothing to wish for. It confesses all that is past, and promises every thing for the future. With regard to the past, you need only leave it to God with an humble confidence, and repair it by a constant fidelity. You ask what penances are required for the past! Can we perform greater, or more salutary ones, than bearing our present crosses? The best reparation of our past vanities is the being humble, and content that God should humble us. The most rigorous of all penances is, notwithstanding all our dislikes and weariness, to do daily and hourly the will of God rather than our own."*

Thursday, July 27.—For some days I have felt keen darts from the enemy, and such a sense of being alone in the world as I cannot express. But last night, in the midst of these feelings, I felt a strong impression that my trials were increased by my not courageously believing every moment that the Lord has absolutely undertaken my whole cause. And I am convinced that when Satan pursues me with glooms and threatenings, I ought to believe that all is permitted to exercise my faith and patience. I feel at all times that my heart has embraced the glory of God, as my one sole care, and therefore I have nothing to do even with my state, whether it is joyous or sad, but only to cling to the covenant I have entered into, of being a whole burnt sacrifice to the Lord; and leave Him to choose for me every moment, who is in himself all wisdom and love. This thought brought with it a sweet peace; and these words were applied to my soul, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great

* How well some Romanists have written on Christian obedience! *O si sic omnia!*—ED.

recompense of reward, for ye have need of patience, and after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promise." I see also that I must singly trust in Jesus, resolved to believe that he will make me more than conqueror through all. "None ever trusted in him, and was confounded." My one cry therefore shall be, "Lord, glorify thyself in thy poor creature, and that is enough." In the night I was exercised with pain more than common, but my mind seemed to be fixed on this,—Lord, glorify thyself! I slept; and waked in that thought, and it brought peace.

August 3.—This time of the year returning affects me much. This day twelve months was the last in which my dear husband enjoyed perfect health, and the last in which he visited his people. O! how does every hour present the past scenes to my view. But I find power to live in the spirit of sacrifice. As I was this morning reading Mr. Wesley's note on Judges, chap. iv, 14, it was made a blessing to me. It is said of Barak, "He went down from Mount Tabor." Mr. Wesley adds, "He did not make use of the advantage which he had of the hill, where he might have been out of the reach of Sisera's iron chariots. He boldly marches down into the valley, to give him the opportunity of using his chariots and horses, that so the victory might be more glorious." So it seems to be with me. When I had every help and every comfort, he brought me into the valley indeed! unto the loss of all my earthly comforts; and into deep and fierce temptation. And yet those very things which would have been a great trial to me, and a great alarm to my fears, when I had my dearest companion with me, are nevertheless rendered easy; and my Captain going before seems to gain for me an easy victory. He is my light in difficulties, my protection in dangers, and my continual shield. But that word of the Lord spoken to Gideon, "The people are too many for me to deliver Israel, by them," casts a still clearer light on my path. I was the happiest of women! I had every thing which friendship, the most heavenly and refined, could give. My helps were too many: I could not feel my deep nothingness. God has stripped me of all! Yet I will look every moment for the complete victory.

Monday, August 14.—How awful a Sabbath was yesterday to me! The remembrance of the tremendous scene that day twelve months, deeply penetrated my heart. The whole of the last week has been to me very solemn. Every hour has pointed out some part of the bitter cup which I have drunk, and do still deeply drink of.

This day has also been a time of deep examination. What difference do I find between this and the last fourteenth of August, the day of my dear husband's death? I find a good deal, many ways. First, I have more vehement longing after Christ. Secondly, I am stripped of all desire of human comforts, and dead to earth in a fuller degree than I ever was before in any part of my life. Thirdly, That fierce conflict of temptation which I endured at that time has wrought for my good. Fourthly, I am more constant and faithful in private prayer; indeed it is my one business: and I have a more watchful spirit. Fifthly, I feel a more perfect resignation; and though my wound continually bleeds, yet I can continually say, *Thy will be done*. Yet nothing can supply the place of the full indwelling Spirit. The Lord is ever with me. I have surprising helps and deliverances, and victory in every trial. I feel I am crucified to the world; but yet I want *the promise of the Father* in its fullness.

Tuesday, August 15.—Yesterday being (according to the days of the month) the annual return of the time when my dearest love departed this life, I set it apart for prayer and close examination, to know what I had gained or lost in this black year. Most of the day I was in heaviness; but by the light of God I clearly discerned his powerful hand was upon me. The entire deadness I find to every thing worldly; the purity in which the Lord continually keeps my soul; the increasing vigour of my spiritual affections; my great love for souls, and abundant liberty in speaking to them, with the many degrees of resignation to the Divine will which I feel my soul sunk into; and that spirit of love which ever prompts me to turn the other cheek, all give me good hope. Now, thought I, though I felt a measure of all this before, is not the increase of all these an evident mark that the work of God is deepened in my soul? I saw it was so, and was constrained to cry out, *This hath God wrought!*

I then was led to reflect on my union with my dear husband, and saw how much of the heavenly state we had enjoyed together; and it seemed as if I so longed to give up all for God, that I offered up to his divine will even our eternal union, (if it was in reality, as many suppose, that separate spirits forget all they have known and loved here,) that his will might be done. I seemed content, so my dearest love and my own soul were lost in his immensity, and should know each other no more! I then found, as it were, a conversation carried on in my mind. The question arose, What part of our union can heaven dissolve? It will take away all that was painful—such as our fears for each other's safety, our separations, &c. But what of the pleasant part can heaven dissolve? I answered from the bottom of my heart, Nothing, Lord, nothing! Clear as light it appeared before me, that heaven could not dissolve any thing which agreed with its own nature. Let two drops of water, two flames of fire, or any two quantities of the same element, be put together, they would not destroy each other, but would be increased. So what came down from God would, when returned to its source, live for ever, and be corroborated, but not lessened.

I am quite at a loss for words to describe the feelings of that hour; but it fixed in my soul an assurance of our eternal union. And as it increased my tender affection toward my dear husband, so it seemed to spread it to all around. I felt it reflect, as it were, backward and forward, to and from all the heavenly host: all seemed doubly dear, through that endearing love I found to him. At the same moment a peculiar sense of union with my friend Ryan sprang up in my soul; and I seemed to worship with them both before the throne. As I rose from my knees, I had an application of these words, as from his own dear mouth:—

“The days that in heaven they spend,
For ever and ever shall last.”

O! what did I feel! My eyes overflowed with tears, and my heart with praise!

November 15.—Last Sunday (the 12th) was to me a heavy day. That was the day my dear husband gave himself to me, and that I gave myself to him, or rather the Lord gave us to each other. But I was enabled to go

through the duty which the Lord called me to that day, with calmness and resignation.

This day I had, at my ten o'clock hour, much freedom in pouring out my heart to the Lord. I prayed that I might have an increase of faith. I then opened an old book, which helped me to make some reflections very suitable to the present posture of my mind. I had been considering whether I might expect as fully to glorify my Saviour as one who had been less guilty and sinful. For two days that question had been uppermost in my heart, and the following words much in my mouth:—

“If so poor a worm as I
May to thy great glory live!”

But to-day I was led into the following considerations: The Lord Jesus hath said, *They to whom much is forgiven, love much*, but *they to whom* (comparatively) *little is forgiven, love little*; and this is corroborated by three parables, *The lost sheep, the piece of money, and the prodigal son*. But why is it so? Can I find sufficient ground for my faith to set its foot upon? The following thoughts occurred to my mind:—First, We generally love best what has cost us most. My Saviour has drunk a more bitter draught for me than for many;* therefore he hath paid a higher price for me. All the pain, shame, and evil consequences of sin “he hath borne in his own body; he hath borne my grief, and carried my sorrows.” Well, then I have more to love him for than any other.

Secondly, The author observes, “It is certain we may believe that God will give them the first place in his esteem who have glorified him most in this world.” But who are they? Doubtless those who *believe* most—who come nearest to the faith of Abraham; for to believe in God’s faithfulness to his promises, and in his power to perform them, is to give him glory. Rom. iv, 20, 21, “He staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” From hence it follows, that to believe the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises, and in his

* Here is a fine illustration of those words of the apostle, “In lowliness of mind, let each esteem the other better than himself.” Can we keep the *unity of the Spirit* without this?—En.

power to perform, (even in those cases where the performance is most difficult and rare,) is a greater glorifying of God, and shows a higher degree of faith, than to believe in ordinary cases only, wherein the belief is not so generous and noble, or so remote from the common principles of reason. The high commendation of Abraham's faith, by which he is said to give glory to God, (i. e., in a very signal and transcendent manner,) is expressed in these words, *who against hope believed in hope*. His faith breaking through the strong oppositions which the dictates of reason and nature made against it, was highly pleasing to God, and cast an abundance of glory upon him in that respect. Hence he pronounced him *the father of the faithful*, and *made him the father of many nations*; that is, he conferred and settled this great dignity upon Abraham, to be for ever after reputed and acknowledged the great exemplar, or pattern of all, who to the end of the world should believe; and who, for their number, should equalize many nations. Therefore, that believing in God which accords most with this faith of Abraham, hath most of the spirit and power of that grace. That which lifteth up itself in the soul against the strongest assaults or encounters, must needs glorify God more than that which hath only the common impediments and obstructions to overcome. Now it is plain that he who hath been an inveterate and obdurate sinner, and the most deeply ungrateful; and who hath on his conscience a heavier burden of guilt than any other;—when he believes, I say, he hath much communion with Abraham in the excellence of his faith, and believeth against many fierce lions and bears in his way: against the strongest and most violent temptations to diffidence and despair. Whereas, he who hath no such mountains in the way for his faith to leap over; he who hath no such armed fears, no such imperious contradictions of sin to encounter; his faith, though it hold good correspondence with the faith of Abraham, in the nature and truth of it, yet it is far beneath it in that crowning property whereby it gave glory to God so abundantly.*

* "The weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den." To a mind less devoted than Mrs. Fletcher's, these speculations might be dangerous. They might lead to Antinomianism, which, as Mr. Wesley observes, (in the Minutes of one of the first confer-

December 12.—In prayer this morning I was led to see the beauty of faith in reposing the whole soul on God. Surely, O Lord, thou requirest nothing of me but to believe on thee for all I want! I find the strongest dart of Satan is against my faith. He tells me, all day long, that I believe because I will believe, and not by the immediate gift of God—not by the operation of his Spirit. It seems that is the only hold Satan has on my soul. But was not my first word (when seven years old) an invitation to believe?

“Who on Jesus relies, without money or price,
The pearl of forgiveness and holiness buys.”

The same is often applied to me now: and does not the whole Scripture lead to, and require, believing? Were not the Jews rejected for unbelief? Was it not esteemed hardness of heart in Israel because they would not believe the bare promise of God, and so enter into the good land? I feel a continual power to trust my all to Jesus, and the more I trust, the more it unites me to God. Then I do, I will trust him, though legions of temptations appear to hinder! What mercy! I have no temptation to sin!—no; my soul hates all that God hates! But every stroke is against my faith, as if I believed too much. I prayed the Lord to direct me to some book on the subject, and found, as soon as I rose from my knees, one which I never saw before, among my dear husband's collection. I opened it on this subject—“Christ the example of our faith.” The writer observes on these words, “He is near that justifies me: who shall contend with me?” that Christ is brought in, as if uttering them before the high priest's tribunal, when they spit upon and buffeted him. When he was also condemned by Pilate, then he exercised faith in God his Father: “He is near that justifies me;” and as in his condemnation he stood in our stead, so in this hope of his justification, he speaks in our stead also, and as representing us in both. And upon this the apostle pronounces in like words, concerning all believers, Rom.

ences,) comes, in doctrine, within a hair's breadth of the highest truths of the Gospel. Mrs. Fletcher, however, was preserved from this danger, and always found Divine aid in the exercise of faith. **27** it she overcame.—**ED.**

viii, "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" Christ was condemned; yea, hath died—who, therefore, shall condemn? We have this communion with Christ in his death and condemnation; yea, in his very faith. If he trusted in God, so may we; and we shall as certainly be delivered. Observe, Christ also lived by faith. We are said, John i, 16, to "receive of his fulness, and grace for grace," that is, grace answerable and like unto his, and so among others, faith.

"To explain this—First, In some sense Christ had a faith for justification like to ours, though not a justification through faith, as we have. He went not out of himself to rely on another for righteousness, for his own was perfect: He was 'the Lord our righteousness.' Yet he believed on God to justify him, and had recourse to God for justification. *He is near* (says he) *that justifies me*. If he had stood upon his own person merely, and upon his Divinity, there would have been no occasion for such a speech; but as he stood in our behalf there was; for what need of justification, if he had not been, in some way, exposed to condemnation? He must therefore be supposed to stand here at God's tribunal, as well as at Pilate's, with all *our sins* upon him. And so Isaiah tells us in chapter liii, 'God laid on him the iniquities of us all. He was made sin and a curse,' and stood not in danger of Pilate's condemnation only, but of God's too, unless he satisfied him for all those sins. And when the wrath of God for sin came thus upon him, his faith was put to it to trust and wait on God for justification, that he might take off those sins and his wrath from him, and acknowledge himself satisfied, and the surety acquitted. Therefore, in Psalm xxii, he is brought in as putting forth such a faith as we here speak of, crying out, *My God! my God!* when, as to sense, *his God had forsaken him*. Yea, at the sixth verse, we find him laying himself at God's feet, lower than ever any man did! *I am a worm, and no man*, a worm which all tread on, and no one thinks it wrong to kill;—and all this because *he bore our sins!*

"Now his deliverance and justification from all these, (to be given him at his resurrection,) was the matter, the business he trusted God for; even that he should rise again, and thus appear acquitted from them all. Se-

condly, Neither did he exercise faith for himself only, but for us also; and that more than we are put to it to exercise for ourselves: for he, in emptying himself, and dying, trusted God with the merit of all his sufferings beforehand; there being such a countless multitude of souls to be saved thereby to the end of the world. God trusted Christ before he came into the world, and saved millions of souls upon his voluntary offering and engagement, and then Christ at his death trusted God again as much.* In Hebrews ii, 12, 13, 14, it is made an argument, that Christ became a man like us, because he was put to live by faith, and the apostle brings in these words as prophesied of him, 'I will put my trust in him,' as a proof of his being so constituted. Now how should the consideration of these things help us to believe, since, in this example of Christ, we have the highest instance of believing that ever was. Hast thou the guilt of innumerable sins upon thee? Consider what Christ had, though not his own. Luther boldly says, 'Christ was the greatest sinner that ever was'—that is, by imputation. And yet he trusted God to justify him from all, and to raise him up from under the wrath due to them. Dost thou say, Christ was God, and knew he could satisfy; but I am a sinful man! Well, but if thou art one who castest thyself on Christ, and believest on him, thou art made one with Christ, and Christ speaking these words, *He is near that justifieth*, spake them in thy name as well as his own, for he stood in thy stead. It was only thy sins, and those of others, which exposed him to condemnation! and thou seest what his confidence was beforehand, that God would justify him. And if he had left any of them unsatisfied for, he had not been justified. But by his being justified from all sin, shall all sinners be justified who believe in him? Certainly for this very reason our sins shall not hinder

* "Great is the mystery of godliness," especially in every thing respecting the holy Trinity. Eternity will be employed in developing the divinity and glory of our redemption. That the FATHER should become the God of the Son, by the incarnation! and that "God manifest in the flesh," should believe, obey, and suffer; and "through the eternal Spirit" thus "offer himself a sacrifice to God," in the truth of the nature which he had assumed—what a depth is here! "Angels desire to look into it." The whole universe is interested in it, and will be affected by it for ever.—Ep.

our coming to God. He then brings in those words, John xvii, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.' Showing how we possess all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus."

I found a sweet and clear light shine on the above, and many other passages of the book; and praised God for the answer of prayer. In short, I felt we have all in Christ, and that they feel it most who believe most!

December 28.—My soul seems entirely fixed on the glory of God! For some days that thought has been continually in my mind, O that I could really know that he did glorify himself in me!* If I was sure that all I feel is according to his will, then whatever sorrow or conflicts I endure, I should have a continual heaven. I entreated the Lord to show me what it was to glorify him; and in what manner the soul could bring him most glory.

In a few days my prayer was in part answered. He showed me, if a lamp were set in the middle of a table, and several crystals around it, some more, some less clear, that the clearest crystal would best reflect the brightness of the lamp. As to my question, Which were the souls that brought most glory to God? I was taught that I must *judge nothing before the time*, for no true judgment could be formed till that day "when he should come to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe!" Then those who had been most emptied of self, most deeply humbled, and most fully prepared to receive and reflect the image of Christ, should eternally bear the highest resemblance to their Lord. I saw all good, all glory was in him, and nothing could bring honour to God, but our becoming nothing, that he might be all in all! I say I saw it, but I mean in a far deeper sense than ever I did before! O how short are words! I used to feel a pain in writing a diary because my words seemed to convey more than I meant; but now for some time I have felt just the contrary. I feel more than I can express.

January 2, 1787.—My mind has been yesterday and to-day much affected with the thought of beginning a new year. This day five years I left Cross Hall in com-

* The "unction of the Holy One," giving a consciousness of our conformity to the Son of God, and to his word, can alone bestow or continue this high privilege.—Ed.

pany with my dearest husband. O, what have I seen in five years! And what may I see before the end of the two next? Those words have been much with me for some days, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." O that I may learn to do it in the most perfect manner!

I am amazed at the goodness of the Lord in many things. I see him opening all my way before me day by day. He cuts out my work, and shows me how to employ every hour. My heavy affliction, which I continually feel from the loss of my dearest love, I do find power to offer up each moment to the Lord! Yea, I praise him in the midst of my sorrow that I have such a sacrifice to offer. What hath my Saviour done and suffered for me! I shall not repent when I get to glory that I have suffered a little for him. Though of all I have felt, nothing ever came near this! It has left the finest strings of nature bleeding! But all is well. I feel my mind drawn to live on that word, *Thy will be done*. In that I rest, and will for ever rest. My soul, wait thou only upon God, for of him cometh my salvation. A deep watchful spirit is what I am praying and waiting for. I mean that continual cleaving to Jesus, which is implied in that word,—*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee*.

January 9.—Thinking this morning of my temptation, that my feeling of God is not sensible, and consequently my joy but weak, the following thought came to my mind, Do I not believe *the whole world lieth in the wicked one*, and that he *leadeth them captive at his will*? But was I conscious of his presence or power in any manner that could be called sensible? I was not. Do I not believe, this was my own state? I do: I know I *abode in the wicked one*, and was *led captive at his will*. But I know I was in him, by the way and disposition I walked in. I walked in the way to hell, adding sin to sin; except when now and then a touch of God interfered. I walked in the disposition of loving and caring for life; I took my own care on myself, and sought my own happiness out of God. But I called all this following my reason, and my understanding, so that all the work of the wicked one on the spirit was invisible, and hidden from me. Now the apostle says, "As ye have rendered your members ser-

vants to iniquity, so render them unto righteousness." Thus the work of God on the spirit is invisible, and hidden many times. But I have known the sensible deliverance, and the converting power; and now also he leads me in a way and disposition just contrary to what I was—in the way to heaven, for I feel my treasure is there, though I seem to know only the marks of his feet. I feel my wishes dead to all of earth. I feel his will is my refuge! and as to my disposition, I long for full conformity to him. I live in an act of offering up my whole self to God almost every moment with a blessed degree of peaceful earnestness. And therefore I will rejoice in this. If I knew before that I was in the evil one, and led by his will, though I had only a hidden communion; I know now I dwell in God, and am led by his will, though I have not what some call sensible joy.* But I seem to have given my hand to God, as a child to its mother, and he leads me hour by hour. The above thought was much blessed to me. A sweet light shone on the work of grace in my soul, and I have since quietly leaned upon the bosom of my Saviour.

January 10.—All day yesterday my faith seemed to grow stronger, and more nakedly to hang on Jesus. Now and then also sweet glimpses of the glorious power of faith opened before me. I said, Lord, give me a word to be as a sword in my hand! Immediately it came into my mind.

"I shall o'ercome through faith alone,
And stand entire at last."

April 30.—Having been called to take a journey, I often thought, while changing from place to place, and meeting with some things rather difficult, that I was as a ball which could never fall wrong. I left all to God, and every thing came right. Yet my loss and painful remembrance of what the circumcising knife of death had done, seemed to be renewed by every scene. Herein I learned a lesson. Many had said a journey would help me; variety of objects would tend to lessen my grief. But I did not find it so. My health was more poorly than at

* How greatly was she perplexed on this point by the injudicious conversation of some of her friends, whom the Lord, for wise and good reasons, led in a way more directly sensible!—Ed.

home, and sorrow seemed increased, and not lessened, by all I met with. Nevertheless I saw the will of God, and can say, He gave me to acquiesce every moment; and whatever my body might feel, my soul gained good, and my faith is much increased by a thousand instances of the love and care of my adorable Saviour manifested to me in that season. Deep humiliation attended me in all my exercises, public or private; and I know the journey was of the Lord.

May 3.—Since my return home, I have felt my soul sink deeper into God. Some time ago I was awaked with these words,—

“Give to the winds thy fears,
Hope, and be undismay’d;
God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears,
God shall lift up thy head.”

Two days ago I was stirred up with reading those words in Dr. Doddridge’s Life, “There must be an enlargement of soul before any remarkable success on others, and a great diligence in prayer and strict watchfulness over my own soul previous to any remarkable and habitual enlargement in my ministry; and deep humiliation must precede both.” I cried for power to redouble prayer. I was afterward much tempted, but in prayer I saw how perfect a sacrifice Christ had paid to the Father for all my sins! I at this moment exult in the thought,

“Fully absolved through this I am,
From fear and sin, from guilt and shame.”

August 16.—All this last fortnight has been a time of great trial to me; I think as deep as in the last year. Every hour presented some part of the awful scene. A few days before the anniversary of my dear love’s death, I waked one morning out of a dream, in some measure spiritual, but could recollect little of it. I was thinking, will the Lord indulge me on that day with such a communion with my dear love as he did on the last fourteenth of August? These words were then applied to my mind,

“Be in all alike resign’d,
Jesus’ was a patient mind.”

From which I thought I would not look for it; I saw

the leading of the Spirit at this time was quiet resignation. In that posture, therefore, I have held my soul before him : and on that day I did not find any such communion as on the former anniversary.

December 8.—Sally being ill with a bad cough, which that morning seemed worse, her head also much affected, and some fever, I asked of the Lord, in submission, her restoration. She scarcely coughed afterward ! Her head was no more affected, and she found herself, from that time, quite well ! This particular answer to prayer raised much thankfulness in my heart. O, Lord Jesus ! I ask, in thy name, to be made the temple of God through the Spirit ! O Lord, in Jesus' name I ask, do all thy will !

December 10.—For two days various texts have dwelt on my mind relating to suffering ; and, yesterday, an observation which Mr. Horne made in his sermon was blessed to me, viz., that those virtues were most valuable that most prepared us for suffering, because by that we were most conformable to our suffering Head. I know not the cause, but my spirit has all day been much depressed. I am very poorly in body ; and the sense of my separation from my precious love seems to enter as iron into my soul. But, blessed be the Lord, it does not prevent me from following the order of my God.

December 17.—These words were given me, with some power, " With the Lord is plenteous redemption, and he shall save Israel from all his sins." I have found some answers to prayer this week, and my soul is thirsting and waiting for the fulfilment of this promise. Lord, show me how I may be most perfectly pleasing unto thee ! Desire increases in my soul ; yet there is a want unsupplied. I long to know how to get into a full and close communion.

It seems to me since prayer this afternoon, that there is but this one way, a looking continually unto Jesus, as the Israelites to the brazen serpent.

January 10, 1788.—And do I see the beginning of another year ! I can still set to my seal, the Lord hears and answers prayer. O that this year may all be devoted to thee, my adorable Head.

January 17.—I was blessed last night in what Mr. Horne said of his former experience, that " he took those words, *Pray without ceasing*, in a literal sense, and strove every

moment to be in the real act of prayer. Soon after he was brought into so spiritual a frame that wherever he went he carried such a sense of the awful presence of God as cannot be expressed." O my Saviour, I want more of this! My soul has been kept this day going out after God; but I want a fulness which I cannot think but it is the will of God to give. These words are much on my mind, *Let patience have its perfect work. And, After ye have suffered awhile, he will strengthen, stablish, settle you.* I have strangely seen the hand of God in all things! Every thing tells me *the hairs of my head are numbered.* Yet I cannot rest till I can more fully glorify my God. Lord, increase my faith!

January 29.—My way is the way of heaviness. There is a weight of sorrow lies on my spirit; I cannot account for it. Others have much joy; I have but little. My dear husband used to express the same thing; but O! I did not then understand him. Had I but now the advantage of his dear company, how different a use could I make of it! Then I had him to flee to in every trouble, and "cares by dividing were hushed into peace." Now I remember he used to say, "What others were satisfied with, he was not." And really so it is; for I am sure I have more of God than I had then. And yet I was then quite satisfied very often; and had I kept the presence of God, as I do now, I should have called it walking in constant peace. But O! I want a clear passage into the heart of my Beloved! I think I can truly say, "I wrestle not with flesh and blood," I feel no temptation to any sin, but I am fiercely attacked with weights of sorrow, and thoughts that, like barbed arrows, tear my heart.

This day I have covenanted afresh with the Lord, to try what a total abandonment will do. From this day, (four o'clock in the afternoon, January 29,) I abandon myself without reserve, delivering up myself into the hands of God, to the end that he may execute on me his whole will, whether in the way of justice or mercy. I will embrace all sufferings of every kind; though I should see that they are the consequences of my former sins, or present follies. Yea, I am thine, my Jesus, save me! If thou wilt not save me, I am lost for ever! But I will singly trust in Jesus! I will turn to no other for help. I

have long tried what creatures could do, but all in vain. Now I will renounce all reasonings—all reflections on my state; and only fix the eye of my soul on Jesus, always content with what thou givest me, Lord, though it should only be a bare remembrance of thy presence, and an alacrity to meet thy will; and this thou dost give. The strongest desire of my soul is, that thy will may be done in me.

I was blessed to-day by an observation in a spiritual writer, "Not to come out of abandonment, in the extreme pains through which we pass, is something; but the not coming out of *repose* in this abandonment, whatever trials we may pass through in all the rough paths where we may tread—this it is which is very precious in the sight of God."* Again she observes, "Like as he who is in a ship moves not himself, but leaves himself to be moved by the motion of the ship in which he is; so the heart which is embarked in the Divine good pleasure ought not to have any will of its own, but leave itself to be carried by the will of God."

February 12.—This morning, in my hour of prayer, I had some sweet glimpses of the all-sufficiency of Christ. He bore the whole weight of my sins before I had committed one; yea, before I was in being he made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, "for the sins of the whole world." Again, I had a feeling sense of these words, "He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." I was led much to cry for a strong and powerful faith, and for deep humility. I find, on reflection, I love to be abased, yea, I embrace contempt as with open arms; but I do not properly acquiesce when the

* This high attainment in the Divine life may not be easily understood, as expressed by this "spiritual writer." The inspired writers express it with the utmost plainness and simplicity. It is indeed the being saved from all self-will, and in consequence, the resting every moment in the will of God. It is thus only we can "rejoice evermore, and in every thing give thanks." The faith by which we are thus saved can only be sustained by "praying without ceasing;" as Kempis finely expresses it, "To thee is my heart without a voice, and my silence speaketh unto thee!" Such is the victory given by "Christ's dwelling in the heart by faith," Ephesians iii, 17.—Ed.

trial presents itself. I rather start back,* and only embrace it in the second thought. Therefore, I am not so sunk into Christ as to be *fully* a new creature. Lord, grant me this, and I shall have an incontestable evidence of what thou hast done!

February 28, Thursday.—On Tuesday night, as one was saying, “I do not desire to look on myself at all, I only want to look at Jesus Christ, for when I look on myself I reason;” I felt it come with power to my heart, and ever since I have felt a farther lift in faith.

April 3.—Last Friday, Mr. Wesley came. It was a time of hurry, but also of profit above any time I ever had with him before. I could not but discern a great change. His soul seems far more sunk into God, and such an unction attends his word, that each sermon was indeed spirit and life. In preaching on the Trinity, he observed it was our duty to believe according to the word of God; but we were not called to comprehend: that was impossible. Bring me, said he, a worm that can comprehend a man, and I will show you a man that can comprehend God. He observed, that if three candles were burning in a room, the light was but one.†

Many answers to prayer I found during the season they were here, and though my body is now too weak for any hurry, yet all was ordered well, and we were carried through with tolerable ease, and every opportunity was blessed to my soul.

Yesterday I heard, that dear Mr. Charles Wesley died on Saturday last! O, how often have we, in years that are past, taken sweet counsel together! It has left a deep solemnity on my spirit.

April 11.—Last night I felt a peculiar liberty in prayer, in begging for mercy in behalf of my friends in Switzerland. It seems to me it will be answered through my nephew. He grows in grace, and at some seasons ap-

* We ought to feel a repugnance, yea, “an abhorrence to that which is evil.” But this should be attended with resignation to the Lord. In this abhorrence, and in this resignation, “the mind of Christ,” principally consists, and they were constantly manifest in the whole of his blessed life and conduct.—ED.

† O that men were satisfied thus to believe, and wait upon the *high and lofty* ONE, that they might comprehend, *in its glorious effects*, the doctrine of the sacred THREE.—ED.

pears to enjoy very deep communion with God. O, how shall I praise the Lord for his great goodness and abundant faithfulness to his poor creature!

May 2.—I often wish I had more time to attend to my diary : such wonderful answers to prayer are given to me as ought to be recorded.

“ Why should the wonders he hath wrought
Be lost in darkness and forgot.”

May 15, Monday.—It is amazing how the Lord answers prayer. I have written letters, (I may say in faith,) about this preaching house, and have met with success beyond all expectation. If we can but get the ground, all will be well. I do think the whole hundred will be made up before we strike one stroke. On Saturday evening, considering these words, “ Nothing shall be impossible to you,” I acted faith on the Lord for spiritual blessings,—for that fulness I long for. I prayed that I might have the next day a better Sabbath than common, and so it was. In the morning meeting, I found a farther degree of resignation, and entire confidence in Jesus; and in that spirit I passed the day, during which I had to encounter such a variety of incumbrances and trials as were quite uncommon. This encouraged me much. Both Mr. Horne’s sermons were blessed to me, and the noon meeting was attended with an extraordinary power. I find it best to carry every thing to Jesus, and draw all from him, determined to believe that he who hath undertaken my cause will not leave his work imperfect.

June 11.—For some days I have had a clearer sight of the *perfect Saviour* than ever in my life before! I was much blessed in considering the type of the brazen serpent. The following observations, as I read them in a book which fell into my hands, made a deep impression on my mind. First, “ It may seem strange that a serpent should be an emblem of the amiable and dovelike Redeemer; but Moses’ serpent was void of poison, and had no sting, but was only in the form of a serpent.. So ‘ God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,’ but an utter stranger to the venom of sin. Again, it was a method of cure solely constituted and appointed of God. Who could have thought that looking at a dead serpent, and of

brass, could have cured the bite of a living one! Especially if it be true, what some affirm, that the sight of burnished brass is naturally pernicious to those who are bitten of serpents; and that to look on the shape of any venomous creature increases the torment of the unhappy sufferers who are bitten by them. So the method of our recovery by the cross of Christ is a device which claims God himself for its Divine author: and thus the whole method of Gospel salvation is, 'to them who perish, foolishness; but to those who believe, it is the wisdom of God, and the power of God.' Secondly, It was a method of cure that never failed; being no less sure than strange. Not an Israelite died, as Moses assures us, who looked at the brazen serpent: and who were ever confounded that trusted in Christ? Thirdly, It was a method of cure easily put in practice by an Israelite. If he received his wound in a remote part of the camp, and was too ill to draw near, yet if he turned his eye and looked at the serpent lifted up for him, it was enough; he was healed! Fourthly, It was a remedy that might be repeated as often as there was occasion for it. So 'Christ is the propitiation for our sins,' to whom we may warrantably have recourse as often as we are wounded, and in every time of need. Fifthly, It was a remedy that proved effectual, though the sight of the wounded person was ever so weak. So weak faith is saving in its degree, as well as strong, because the object is the same." I had such a clear view how all our wants were supplied by Jesus as I cannot express. Yes, he has atoned for all our sins; he has "reconciled us to God while we were yet enemies!" But we must look to, and trust in him alone; and we may look every moment. The following day, Sunday, as also Monday and Tuesday, I had much outward exercise, but was carried through all as in the arms of the Almighty.

July 16.—I was this day led to consider the advantage of living longer, if the Lord should not take me at the time sister Ryan's dream seemed to point out, viz., the beginning of next year. This subject I set myself to consider, lest any murmuring thought should present itself in the disappointment. First, If I should live, it must be the will of God, and is not his will dear to me? It is true, I may have much more to suffer, but is not that suffering

the will of God? Perhaps I can serve God's children, both their souls and bodies; and did not my Lord absent himself from the joys of heaven to become a man of sorrows for me? Nor is it to be despised if I can thus help my Lord's people by my income. Mr. Baxter says, "Do good to men's bodies, if you would do good to their souls. Say not, things corporeal are worthless trifles, for which the receivers will be never the better. They are things which nature is easily sensible of; and sense is the passage to the mind and will. Dost thou not find what a help it is to thyself to have at any time ease, or alacrity of body; and what a burden and hinderance pains and cares are? Labour then to free others from such burdens and temptations, and be not regardless of them." Indeed, I see it a great honour if I am permitted to sweep the dust from under the feet of the saints. Again, I believe there is a mansion appointed for each, a state and employment for which we are to be fitted. It does not appear I am fitted for the lowest mansion there; but then I know my Jesus can do the work of a thousand years in one day, and I know I may, as my righteousness, claim the Lord my Saviour.

August 5.—Last night I had a powerful sense, in my sleep, of the presence of my dear husband. I felt such sweet communion with his spirit as gave me much peaceful feeling. I had for some days thought that I was called to resist, more than I did, that strong and lively remembrance of various scenes, both of his last sickness and many other circumstances, which frequently occurred with much pain. This thought being present to my mind, I looked on him. He said, with a most sweet smile, "It is better to forget." What, said I, my dear love, to forget one another? He replied, with an inexpressible sweetness, "It is better to forget; it will not be long; we shall not be parted long; we shall soon meet again." He then signified, though not in words, that all weights should be laid aside. His presence continued till I awoke.

August 15.—Last night was the anniversary of my dear husband's death. Three years I have now passed in solemn, awful widowhood; but, glory be to my God! I have found it three years of prayer. Never did I know three years of such suffering, and never did I know three

years of such prayer. Sometimes I have sweet glimpses of the millennial state brought into my soul. At others my way seems thorny, and as if I walked wholly by faith, like my dream of the little star.* Yet I am conscious of a great change: but I want a more abundant evidence that not only many, but "all things are become new." It seemed as if my dear husband remembered the season, for I had a most particular dream. I thought the side of his tomb was opened, (I mean the wall on which the iron plate lies,) and I saw him lying under it, while I lay at his side. We remained so a considerable time, and I felt that sweet, tranquil composure that I always do when he seems sensibly present. He then said, with a sweetness which I cannot describe, "Put thy arm over me and feel what companions I have; they must be thy companions too." I put my arms, and felt bones and broken coffins, at which nature seemed to shrink, but I did not speak. He tenderly answered to my thought, "Thou wilt lay thy head upon me." I felt some regret at the thought of his being there. He again answered to my thought, "I entered this habitation with great comfort and satisfaction." Then I thought two gentlemen came up, and stood by the tomb, and said one to the other, "It is a pity Mr. Fletcher was laid here; it would have been better to have carried him to Mr. Ireland's vault." My dear love looked on them and answered, "There was no need of that. We count it our privilege to be laid together, and we ought to count it our privilege both to rise from one spot."

August 28.—All this week my soul has been drawn out after that promise, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Indeed it is a *narrow way*. I seem fighting with principalities and powers; but, blessed be God, I do not seem ever to be fighting with sin. Yet I am not at rest: I am not entered into perfect rest. I can say, "I wrestle not now, but trample on sin;" but I want what I have not, and which I firmly believe I shall have. Yet when I think death is near, I seem almost impatient for that fulness, that I may begin to live to my God in the full sense.

January 1, 1789.—I feel my soul affected much at the

* See page 99.

thought of seeing the beginning of another year. Perhaps this will be the last with me. May I live each moment as if I were sure it would be so! Lord, be with us in renewing our covenant this night! I have for some time been praying for an enlightened understanding in Divine things; and light has reflected more clearly on the wonderful work of redemption. These words are sweet to me, "In the Lord I have righteousness and strength!" The account I have received of my dear Mrs. Caley's death is precious. She was not in high rapture, but in profound tranquillity and peace. Such has been her life, and such her death. Lord, let me follow her as she has followed thee!* Nurse Peters has also reached the goal. Glory be to thee, my dear Lord, that I had the honour of sending her that one guinea, and to have her last message—that "it helped her to praise thee more abundantly." O how many dear friends have I on the other side the river! And I too am on the wing, only I wait a little till the Lord renew my spiritual strength—

"Till of my Eden repossess'd,
From self and sin I cease."

January 7.—I have been reading over some of my old diary, and found it much blessed to me. It brought to my mind many past scenes, which increased faith and thankfulness; also, it cast a clearer light on my present state.

* Mrs. Caley, well known in that day in London, was a woman of the most devoted spirit, and of the most elegant and polished manners. She drank deeply of the cup of affliction, but *rejoiced evermore* in the will of Him who gave it to her. Mr. Wesley preached her funeral sermon, in London, from Philippians iv. 8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." He declared that he never knew one who thought more upon this Divine assemblage of graces, or with more success. Speaking of her loving and unwearied efforts to win souls for God, he quoted that line of Prior,

"Manna was on her tongue, and witchcraft in her eyes."

Nurse Peters was also well known in London. She was a plain, good woman of admirable sense, and deep experience in religion. It is with great pleasure that I embrace this opportunity of embalming the memory of those excellent women, by uniting them to that of their admirable friend.—En

Comparing my present state with that I felt at Hoxton, I can truly say, now I not only feel all the purity, all the spiritual mindedness, and all the resignation I did then, but in many things I prefer my present dispensation to that. Yet my soul is not satisfied, for I see a far greater salvation before me. In short, it is not the gift, but the full possession of the Giver, my spirit longs for.

March 6.—Last Sunday, as I went to the Lord's table, I renewed my covenant, determining to consider Jesus more immediately as the husband to whom I am joined in every sense of the word;—as he who hath undertaken all for me. Since that time I have more particularly found my soul abiding in his presence, and he every moment carrying on the work of purification. The great promise of my life, on which he hath made me to hope, is that given me when eighteen, "Thou shalt walk with me in white," and repeated in these words, "Thou shalt walk with me in white; I will make thee worthy." The posture of my soul is that of a poor beggar before the Lord, holding before him that petition, "Lord, accomplish to me the word on which thou hast made me to hope!"

Wednesday, March 24.—Yesterday dear Mr. Wesley left us in apparent good health. What a miracle is he! Eighty-six years old, and thus supported! He is going directly to Ireland, and thinks to visit every society there this summer. The Lord preserve him, and accomplish all his will upon him! As he was speaking on Monday, on these words, "God has not given to us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," what an unction attended the word! O may we never, never rest till fully restored to that perfect soundness he described!

April 11.—This Lent I have found a deep sense of the sufferings of my Lord. Yesterday, being Good Friday, we had a solemn meeting at night, but I did not find quite as much life in speaking as at some times. The men (many of them with families) who are come to work at the navigation lay much on my mind. We ought to do something for their souls. Lord, open the way! O let them not go without some light at least.

April 27.—My soul is all upon a stretch for God. Last night and this morning, as I was repeating in prayer, *Thy will be done!* my words were lost. I felt the desire of

his adorable will being done so strongly, that I was forced for some time only to groan. I am continually led to offer up my free will to God. I long to be as mere clay before him. I plead that word on which he hath made me to hope, "Thou shalt walk with me in white; I will make thee worthy." Yet my faith hath a strange drawback; something would suggest that it only meant in eternity, and that I should never glorify him here as I longed to do. Were I to die immediately, this would not be so great a trial; but my health is now much better. I thought I saw the port, but I seem put back again; and perhaps I may live some years. And must I always live at this poor rate? My very heart and soul seem to groan for a closer communion with my God! At some moments (I think every day) I feel as it were a sweet rest; I seem centred in Jesus. But in a few minutes it draws in again, and then I seem to be always believing and longing, but yet without any immediate answer. It is true, faith does not fail; it is in constant exercise, and often seems to hope against hope. But all this I would not mind. Though Naaman was made whole in seven dips, I would not mind if the Lord made me dip seventy times seven. But my grief lies here, I am condemned, often once or twice a day, for some word, or thought, or action—chiefly in words. Indeed the condemnation does not seem to be from the Lord, as if it would come between my soul and him. But I see I have spoken unadvisedly with my lips, and I cannot bear the horror of the view. There are some persons with whom I have much business to transact, who do not see alike, or cordially love one another. In some things both are right, in others both are wrong. I have this connection at present two ways, personally, and by correspondence, and I find it a hard thing to bear my testimony against that which is wrong, and to approve that which is right in both, and yet neither to write nor speak but exactly so far as truth and love require. O that I may from this day see, as in letters of blood, before my eyes continually those words of the apostle, "He that offendeth not in tongue, the same is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body." Ah, Lord! how far am I yet from this perfection.

April 29.—I had some liberty in prayer three times to-

day, the most in the three o'clock hour in the room. I was praying for a clear discovery of the grace or state I might ask for and expect. It came before me as a representation of Christ as the vine, and of my soul as being a branch ingrafted therein. Then I saw clearly that every believer was a branch in him, in part united; but when the branch is perfectly united, it is absolutely a part of the vine. The sap runs freely through every part, it is completely of one nature with it. Then *the mind is in us which was also in Christ. We live no longer but Christ liveth in us*, and are preserved from moment to moment by faith. Now if any knot or impediment were in any of the branches, it would hinder the free circulation of the pure sap through it, and that branch would wither, and in a degree be barren. Hence I saw sanctification in a clearer light than ever. It is to be perfectly ingrafted into the vine; to have no impediment remaining to hinder the flow of the sap, and while the soul thus abides by faith, it brings forth much fruit, and experimentally knows the meaning of those words of St. John, "He that abideth in him sinneth not."

April 30.—My soul hath been led to-day to look at the wondrous love of the Father! "He spared not his own Son; he so loved the world as to lay on him the iniquity of us all"—and "shall he not with him freely give us all things."

June 4.—Satan is striving hard to draw my mind back, but I have found this day a liberty to commit my whole cause into the hands of God. I feel a strong encouragement from these words, *Every one that asketh receiveth*. I ask in Jesus' name to be made a holy soul! O that all this day I may be kept, and directed by the Lord, and walk as in his immediate presence. O for that mind that was in thee!

June 26.—Various providences of late have more and more convinced me of the need of a farther change. I have it at times; but something arises that seems selfish; and again, like anger for a moment, which though never abiding, clearly convinces me I have not yet entered fully into rest. I long to be all devoted to my Lord, and to bring glory to him by every power.

July 6.—At the class, as I was saying, it was not any

peculiar or sudden comforts that so tended to the soul's sanctification, as a constant abandonment and resignation of the whole soul, with every concern, into the hand of Jesus ; I felt in a moment such an insight into the love, faithfulness, and wisdom of Christ, as I cannot describe. O the security I saw in abandoning my soul to him ! It was for a minute glorious indeed. I kept looking, but it drew back, as if a curtain was for a moment drawn up, discovering some glorious scene, and then gradually let down again. But it has left an increase of confidence. O could I always feel what I felt just then, it seems to me it would be a real heaven, and banish all sensibility of fear and suffering. It was what I never felt before in that degree.

July 15.—I had some liberty in prayer this morning, as also at the ten o'clock hour. I found a blessing also in reading Mr. Whitefield's account of the dealings of God with his soul, written on board the ship in his way to Philadelphia. He prayed for the humility of Jesus ; and observes, "From my first awakening to the Divine life, I felt a particular hungering and thirsting after the humility of Jesus Christ. Night and day I prayed to be a partaker of that grace, imagining that the habit of humility would be instantaneously infused into my soul. But as Gideon taught the men of Succoth with thorns, so God taught me humility by the exercise of strong temptation." I was thus led to consider the point ; and though I clearly discerned the same workings of Providence over myself, how often have I been led to pray more for humility than for any other grace, because by nature it is the virtue I am most contrary to ; but in my deep affliction I now discern this was the Lord's way.

• There have been many seasons in which, through pride, imprudence, and sin of various kinds, I have brought great humiliations on myself ; and even where they are caused by our own sin, if they are borne with subjection of spirit to the corrections of God, they work in the end for the salvation of the soul. But at the season I refer to, that of the death of my dear husband, although it really seemed I spoke and acted in an upright spirit, and am now conscious how tender my heart was with the fear of offending, yet I said and did many, very many, unwise

things which tended to lessen me greatly in the eyes of others. O how needful for me to lie still in the hand of God, making it my only business to accept of every thing as from the Lord's hand, hanging on that word by faith, *Thou shalt walk with me in white!* I am convinced that the most profitable of all humiliations, are those that arise, through his grace, from a view of our own blunders, and even from our corruptions.

September 14.—I have been much drawn to pray that the great design of the Lord's coming may be answered, *that he may destroy the works of the devil.* I see, through his grace, my understanding is darkened. I ask in Jesus' name this work to be destroyed; for by the knowledge of Christ alone can I be changed into his likeness. I see Satan raises false fears, false views, and wandering imaginations: I ask deliverance from all these!* My soul lies before the Lord in a waiting posture: in particular I ask power to consecrate the faculty of speech to the service of my God, so that I may never again speak an unadvised word.

September 15.—Last Saturday (September 12) I was fifty years old. O my God, how little have I gained of thee in fifty years! Lord, let this be a jubilee year to me! I will try what prayer can do. Lord, give me a measure of that spirit in which thou didst spend whole nights in prayer! Never was I more stripped, more empty! I have no dependence but on thyself. I long for close communion. My soul pants after it. I have wonderful answers to prayer! And I feel that my humiliations do me good. Yet I do not embrace them as I ought to do. It is perhaps a minute before I rightly enter into the gracious design. When I look to the Lord, all is right; but I want such an habitual look as shall enable me to receive them as a hungry man does his food! Not only to take up, but to glory in the cross of the Lord Jesus. I seem to walk much more by faith than by sight. My soul seems to go out in desire and silent prayer. I am

* It is not clear that those *great and precious promises, by which we are made partakers of the Divine nature*, secure to believers such a deliverance from these attacks, that they should not trouble them, and at times even agonize the soul. But they secure to them such an abiding in Christ, that none of those devices should prevail to unsettle their faith, or separate them from his love.—ED.

mostly in the act of crying, Come! But there seems silence on the side of the Lord! He does not answer by sweet comforts, only by power over sin, purity of mind in a good degree; and an almost constant act of sacrifice.* I love his will, bitter or sweet, but I want him as the bride in the Canticles, *to kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for his love is better than wine.*

September 16.—This morning at the ten o'clock hour, I had freedom in praying for an entire change. I thought, my situation, as to outward things, is the most advantageous to a religious life that can be. I have no cares; indeed I have no need of care. I have plenty of all I can want. Sally, though a tender child, is one of much ability; laying herself out to serve and please me in all things. Matty, my other servant, of a most quiet and peaceable spirit, and rigidly honest and faithful. Blessed be God, her soul also comes forward in the Divine life. Reflecting on this, I drew from it the following encouragement: If I am thus favoured, is it not plain the Lord designs me to be one of those who are brought into close fellowship with himself? May I not attain to a fuller salvation than when involved in all my perplexities? My heart was encouraged. I thought on these words, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Again, "I am come that they may have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." My soul longs for this more abundant life. Lord, pour out on me thy light and truth, and make me, in a complete sense of the word, a new creature! I was led to think of the familiar manner in which our Lord conversed with the women and his disciples after his resurrection. He met them and said, "*All hail,*" (i. e., happiness attend you,) and bid them "tell his brethren he would see them in Galilee"—probably on Mount Tabor, where his glorious transfiguration was manifested before them: and where they heard the voice of God, declaring him "the beloved Son whom they were to hear." They

* And was there no Divine comfort in all these glorious marks and fruits of the new creation? There was. Comfort high as heaven, and which hell can never imitate! Far superior even to those sweet consolations which are so graciously bestowed on young converts, and which some sincere souls so greatly need throughout the whole of their pilgrimage—the *lamb that he carries in his bosom.*—ED.

were also commanded to "tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man should be risen from the dead." The thought struck my mind,—perhaps in this very assembly they were first, to tell it! All this encouraged me greatly.

October 5, Monday.—This has been a day of recollection and prayer, glory be to God! I have had some views of the great designs of God on his redeemed; how through the Son, he will form his own bright and glorious image in us. We are *appointed to be conformed to the image of the Son*, and is he not the *express image of the Father*? A little glimpse of what the Saviour is, and will be to me, now and then for some time beamed forth, and set my soul in a longing posture. Yet it is but like *seeing through the lattice*. I long to know whether what I see before me, and grasp after, may be attained in this life, or must I die to prove it? O my Divine Director, my Prophet, speak and tell me! This is all that keeps me back, not knowing what I may ask, having been so great a sinner. Something says, I shall not fully enter into the good land here.* To-day I was reading those words, "In the last day, Jesus will present himself as judge, to angels, men, and devils." I asked myself, Do I embrace with all my soul, Jesus as my judge! My heart sprang at the thought! Yes, my adorable Judge! I choose thee with all my powers; I acquiesce beforehand in thy sentence, be it what it will: yea, and in all thou shalt appoint from this moment to that time! Many times to-day these words have been my food, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!"

October 6.—I was ill most of last night, but was recollected, and had a sense of undeserved mercies. Reflecting to-day on that point which hath so often hindered me, viz.: Some say, when we have sinned we should wait for a fresh pardon, a fresh sense of it, before we believe. I prayed for light, how to walk in my present state; and the following reflection arose in my mind. I feel my will is turned to the Lord. He who knows all things, knows, I long, I pant, to love him perfectly, and to live every

* Certainly not the *good land* of perfect enjoyment; but "the good land of perfect love," inducing perfect submission, and prompt obedience, we may enter into this day. See Mr. Wesley's sermon entitled, "The Scripture Way of Salvation."—Ed.

moment to his praise, with the full exertion of my powers. But sometimes, when I am waiting before God, it is suggested, I have indulged in the last meal, or I have spoken unadvisedly at such a time. These things have kept me in bondage long. But to-day, I clearly see my one business is to maintain faith. How is it that the soul is ever received after any fall? Is it not at last by believing Christ hath atoned for that sin? Now I feel I could, on the recollection of any stumble, immediately fly to, and weep on the bosom of my Lord. But that thought has presented itself, Am I not an Antinomian? But I will no more take man, but the word of God for my director. What were my Lord's words to Peter? "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." So then this faith ought not to fail, though he denied his Lord with oaths and curses! And what a word was that, when his Lord, foretelling his fall, added, "And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." What tenderness was showed unto him! He wept bitterly, but he still claimed his interest in his Saviour, for he ran to the tomb to seek him. And how did our Lord wipe away his tears! He was seen of him before any of the eleven, 1 Corinthians xv, 5. He was the first preacher at pentecost. The first messenger to the Gentiles. An angel must wait on him to bring him out of prison; and at last, he received the crown of martyrdom. Did not Christ on the cross foresee, and die for all my sins before I had a being? Did he not pay the price for all? But it is only mine by believing. Then if I always believe, does not that word belong to me, "There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit?"* It is true, if the will and affections draw back, the soul will find it hard so to believe as to return to the former fellowship. And yet there is no way for them but by believing. The case I mean is,—I see it my privilege to live always under the atonement; and though I do wrong, and fall short continually, yet I may and must run directly to my God, just as I did with my husband. If he said, Polly, thou shouldst not have said or done so; I asked his forgiveness, and had no fear of his loving me

* See the note on the 220th page.—Ed.

the less. Nay, usually I found more tenderness when I acknowledged my fault, than before I fell into it. That word also came to my mind, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." And again, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible. He that believeth is justified from all things."

October 31.—These words have made a great impression on my mind of late—when one of the scribes asked our Lord, "What he should do to inherit eternal life?" He replied, "What readest thou in the law?" The scribe answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind, and soul, and strength; and thy neighbour as thyself." Our Lord replied, "Thou hast well said; this do, and thou shalt live." I discerned a fulness in this passage which I never did before, and all my soul cried for the possession of that spirit of love, to which this absolute promise of life is made. Many times I have observed, in prayer, or at some peculiar seasons in other means, such a spirit of purity, humility, and love, has overwhelmed my soul, as is hardly to be expressed. At other times, the Divine glory appeared but dim. I saw at once the cause. At the former times, the soul turned from every intervening object, and sunk into her proper place, discerning the immense distance between a holy God and sinful self. Then she begins to shine in his brightness. *Her light is come, because the glory of the Lord is risen upon her.* But if she rises out of her deep absorbment, and lets in self-esteem, what wonder if she then reflects the odious image of sin, instead of the beauty of the Lord Jesus. I perceived also, that there is a great difference between humble thoughts and despairing thoughts. Humble thoughts, though they may cause much pain by the horror and detestation which they cause the soul to feel, yet they exalt the Saviour, and make the soul admire the justice as well as the mercy of God. But despairing thoughts, injected by the devil, drive the soul from God, and represent him as "a hard Master, gathering where he hath not strowed." The faithful soul will find many such attacks, therefore the safest way is continually to give up herself to the Lord, crying, *Thy will be done!* That is a weapon Satan cannot stand against.

November 12.—This day, being the day of our marriage, many painful remembrances would present themselves to my mind. Each year I wrote, “we are happier and happier!” But I feel a great thankfulness that I have such an offering to bring to Him who gave up all for me! Yes, I praise thee, my Lord, that thou hast done thine own will, and not mine. At ten I took my hour before the Lord, and felt some power afresh to dedicate myself to Jesus—entering into a marriage covenant with him. A light shone on my soul to discern how the husband hath undertaken the whole cause of the wife, and I saw both body and soul safe in his hands. I then entreated my adorable Husband to take all the freedom of my will into his own hand; and, as we say to the surgeon, bind me, (for an operation,) so I entreated my Lord to conform me to himself in any way that he pleased; only that he should be glorified. A thought again presented itself, what if, in eternity, it be his will that I should neither know nor have any communion with my dear husband? I was enabled to answer, Lord, thy glory is all in all to me! I felt that he should choose for me. And I was enabled to give up soul, body, life, death, time, and eternity to him, and covenanted to live on his will alone! And henceforward I will consider this day as my wedding day with the Lord, holding my dear husband in him, whose soul I know will have joy in heaven upon every nearer approach which I make to his Saviour and my Saviour! his all and my all!

November 14.—After I had spent some time in prayer this morning I felt an increasing freedom in imploring that the whole mind of Christ might be brought into my soul. Those words are much in my thoughts, “Be ye not afraid, neither doubt, for God is your guide,” 2 Esdras xvi, 75. Lord, increase my confidence! I saw how impossible it was to have union where there was not similitude; and my cry was, Fulfil that word, O Lord, on which thou hast made me to hope! *Make me clean through thy word!* and *present me to thyself without spot!* Afterward, reading the Life of Ignatius Loyola, and especially what pains he took, and what labour he went through to gain souls, I could not but be struck at the glaring difference between him and me. One day, having

taken a step he believed to be his duty, but which caused him both pain and ignominy—and being rebuked by a friend, he replied, “I should not object to traverse all the streets of Paris barefoot, with horns on my head, and clothed in the most ridiculous habit, could it but gain one soul to God.”* The conviction immediately struck me, that all I wanted was to be filled with the love of God, and that would produce every effect in its proper order. Lord, let my incessant cry be for this! O give me this most excellent gift of charity!

January 7, 1790.—And now another year is gone, and I am so much nearer eternity! Yes, my faithful Saviour! I will rejoice in the thought, because thou art faithful, and I do believe for the fulfilment of all thy promises: *they are yea and amen in thee*, on whom I rely. I believe *I shall walk with thee in white!* O carry on thy work! I long to be just what my God pleases.

In the last month I have had a peculiar experience. I was often tempted to think that the deadness I felt to all earthly things might be produced by my great affliction on account of my dear husband's death, and I was sometimes damped by that thought in my ardour of praise. But a few weeks ago, I was permitted to feel all the temptations I ever felt, except resentment, and I was conscious I could fall into the same desires of comfort on earth from which I had been so long delivered. My soul was grieved exceedingly; yet strange, I seemed nearer to God than before! I was amazed; but these words came to my mind, “Know that from Jesus alone is your salvation.” I cried to the Lord that he would graciously prove it by removing the temptation, and so it proved. Glory be to my complete Saviour! It is now like a dream, but I know and feel the Divine reality.

I seem to be surrounded with blessings, and see such a care of the Almighty over all that concerns me, as I cannot express. Sally has been very ill, but raised again in answer to prayer as by miracle. My house is a sweet rest, and “a secret place in the wilderness to hide me in.” Many storms are without, but none can touch me. I seem

* Pious Protestants well know how to appreciate this. True piety is of no sect: it is *truly* catholic.—ED.

hid from all the evils of which my letters inform me. I have peace within, resting in hope; and *peace in all my borders*. I have communion with my friends above, and none below can harm or injure me. As to temporal things—I inherit now (and have done some years) the fulness of that promise, given to me in my deep poverty, “Thou shalt be the head and not the tail: thou shalt lend and not borrow.” It is amazing how many I can help, both by lending and giving; and when I made up my book this last Christmas, I was surprised to see on how little we had kept the house, and how large was the poor’s account;* yet a little is always left to go on with. He does bless my bread and my water. I want for nothing. I live better than I think I need, and yet, according to the promise, I have always *plenty of silver*.

January 13.—Two days ago a gentleman and his wife came to see me from a considerable distance. He told me that for two years he had walked in the full liberty of the sons of God; but for the last eight years he had been in the darkness of unbelief. I was led to speak freely on the way of faith; and mentioned an instance I had lately heard of a good woman who, when in prayer, her eyes being shut, had a sight of paradise, where she saw our Lord as sitting in the midst of the glorified spirits. There proceeded from him such beams of purity, light, and glory, as penetrated them till they were all irradiated, and shone with his glory. She saw also the same glory stream down on the saints below, and they, in the same manner, keeping their eyes on the Lord, were divinely changed. But when any of them turned away their eyes, they received his beams no longer. The same glory still shone round them, but they complained of being barren and dry, and that they could get no answers to prayer. I observed that I thought this was his case. If we keep faith in exercise we shall and must receive, for we may have of God what we will take of him. As I spake I said in my heart, If this is the truth as it is in Jesus, Lord, set to thy seal! And so he did, for the power of God came down on the gentleman, and constrained him to cry out, O! now I feel

* In an account for one year, I find the whole expense of her wearing apparel amounted to a trifle more than two pounds.—Ed

it again! I feel the power of God go through me! When I came into this room my heart was as hard and as heavy as if the whole world lay on it. But now it is all gone, and I feel the power of God penetrate my whole frame. His wife also was much affected, and I trust the blessing will abide.

January 25.—A dream which was told me the other day by S. Colley was blessed to me. She thought she was surrounded by dangers, but looking up she saw a large eye always fixed on her, which much encouraged her faith in an overruling Providence. Then she thought she got into a river, and began to sink. It was very deep and clear, and she was much afraid; but looking down she saw this great eye underneath her, which caused such a faith to spring up in her soul, that she laid herself down on the water with as much comfort and ease as if upon her bed. She felt she could not sink with the power of the Almighty underneath her.

January 27.—My soul was yesterday and this day much drawn out in prayer. Those words are often before me, "None knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son is pleased to reveal him."

I long for this revelation. I feel it is, in its fulness, the thing I want. Thus only St. Paul's prayer can be answered, Ephesians iii, 14-21. O for this revelation of thy love! I wait for it moment by moment. And thou sayest, "They shall not be ashamed who wait for thee!" I wait for the salvation "which shall be brought in at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

February 11.—The seventh of this month (on which was our quarterly meeting) I found a good day. My soul saw the way of faith, and felt a degree of that liberty which from believing flows. At our class on Tuesday night we agreed to unite our prayers the ensuing week for power over *imaginations*, (2 Cor. x, 5,) especially during the time of prayer; and, blessed be God, I find some answer.

February 26, Friday.—I have found this a comfortable day. While talking with brother T. the way of faith was more and more beautiful in my eyes. In prayer I had a sweet discovery of the depth contained in those words, "Whatsoever things ye ask in prayer, believe that

ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Yesterday I proved that truth. I asked in the name, and in the right of my Lord, that his will might be done without interruption in me all day ; and that I might be kept and taught in every word and action, and enabled to abide as in the presence of God. And though I had no sensible joy, yet I found the power of God keeping me, and approving me each moment since that time. I have been poorly in body, but I so see the hand of God in all, that I seem like a little babe held in the arms of its mother. As brother T. was speaking, I saw the way of enjoying pure love clearer than ever. O ! wherefore did I ever doubt ? According as I believe, so it is ! Surely of late the Lord is increasing my faith, and teaching me anew to walk with himself. Mr. T. observed that " God brought his children through different dispensations, sometimes of sorrow, sometimes of joy. That it was our part to trust him in all, believing all would be right in its season ; and equally accepting either correction or comfort. God knew what he was about to do with Job, and Job had only to lie still under the hand of God ; for a time was coming in which God would surely lift him up. He had no need to plead his own cause, for he was safe in God's hand, who was then making him a spectacle of glory before angels and devils ; though to man he appeared very different."

June 26, Saturday.—I am much led this morning to pray for a resigned will, to stand to the beck of my Lord with a ready mind.—Yes, he shall do with me and mine as seems to him good. Company in the house is a great cross ; they consume much time, and the serving tables seems to clash with my Sabbath employment. But in this also thou, my Lord, shalt dispose and direct : only give me a watchful mind, and then set me to entertain all the strangers thou pleasest. I know not what blessed angels may come with them as their attendants, and I will keep to my old motto :—

" O that my Lord would count me meet
To wash his dear disciples' feet !
After my lowly Lord to go,
And wait upon his saints below ;
Enjoy the grace to angels given,
And serve the royal heirs of heaven !"

But I see there needs a determination to be singular. Some professors, when they have company in the house, sit chatting with them all day. This I must not do. It was one of the first lessons God taught me, to keep my rules of retirement; to do my business, as to writing, visiting the sick, meeting the classes, &c., leaving them to their freedom, and taking mine. One part of my work must not overturn another.

August 14.—What have I seen within these five years! This day five years my beloved was on his deathbed. But how is it with me now? I answer, and from the ground of my heart, "It is well."—I have nothing to do but to praise! I love him at this moment as much as ever I did in my life; but I love the will of God still better.—Yes, I adore thee, my almighty Saviour, that thou hast done thine own will, and not mine; and that my dearest love has been five years in glory! O that I might be permitted to feel a little of what he now is—lost and swallowed up in thee! Lord, are we not one? "The head of the woman is the man, as the head of the man is Christ;" and "whom God hath joined together none can put asunder." Adam and Eve were never intended to be separated: and shall sin so overturn thy original design, as that it cannot be restored by the Saviour? Surely, no! As thou hast taken away the sting of sin, so thou hast taken away the smart of separation. We are yet one; and shall I not feel a communication from thyself passing through that channel? Lord, make me spiritually minded!—"meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light."

August 24.—My soul is much stirred up by the thought that I have lost time more than any one that has really walked in the ways of the Lord. It seems to me that I begin to see a fulness in the word of God—such a depth in the promises, that I have been looking hitherto only for the first principles of Christianity. O for that baptism of the Spirit! that sanctifying grace! It seems as if I wanted the Lord to come and take away the last breath of nature's life! I see a great deal in these words, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand:" the kingdom of abiding "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Surely that is "the kingdom of heaven," of which our Lord said that the least member of it "was greater than John the

Baptist." Lord, bring me into that liberty! I ask it in the name of my Saviour and Advocate.

Last night I prayed that I might not have so disturbed a night as I have found of late, but that the Lord would keep away those hurrying dreams which often disturb the quiet repose of my spirit. And it was so: I found a difference. About the middle of the night I saw my dear husband before me. We ran into each other's arms. I wished to ask him several questions concerning holiness, and the degree to be expected here, &c. But I found something like a dark cloud on my memory, so that I said in myself, I cannot frame the question I would ask; I am not permitted. At length I asked, My dear, do you not visit me sometimes? He answered, "Many times a day." But, said I, Do not "principalities and powers" strive to hinder you from communing with me? He said, "There is something in that." And does their opposition cause you to suffer in coming to me? He answered, "There is not much in that." But do you know every material thing that occurs to me? "Yes." And may I always know that thou art near me when I am in trouble, or pain, or danger? He paused, and said faintly, "Why, yes;" then added, "but it is as well for thee not to know it, for thy reliance must not be upon me." He mentioned also some in glory who remembered me—and said, "Mr. Hey is with us also; he bid me tell thee so; and by that thou mayest know that it is I that speak to thee." Mr. Hey died a short time before, very happy in the Lord.

September 14.—As I was in prayer about ten to-day, a thought came into my mind, God is incomprehensible; but we are called to walk by faith, therefore I am to believe what I cannot comprehend. And O! what sweet condescension did I see in that stupendous goodness! He took our nature that we might be able to form some conception of him. He stooped to me to lift me up to himself. "God so loved us as not to spare his own Son. Then will he not with him freely give us all things?" I see clearly it is the infinite desire of the blessed Triune God, to communicate himself to the creature.—Ah! why is it then I do not enjoy more of him?

September 17.—I was much struck with the comparison of the sun drawing up the vapour, and purifying it

as it draws. As I was walking to the Lloyds' I thought much on it, and said in my mind, How shall I know, and coincide with this attraction? Immediately it came to my mind, by that word, "Thy will be done;" by this resignation we instantly enter into the attraction, whatever state we were in before;* and by a simple look to Jesus, a waiting on the Spirit to do its office on us, we continue therein. Lord give me so to wait every moment! I was comforted in my visits yesterday morning, and again to-day. Glory be to God, souls come forward, and I have been enabled to walk about more this summer, than for a long time. Lord, make me to be as a leaf to the wind before thee! ready to obey all thy will. Great liberty and power I have found for some months, both in public and private meetings. O what a favour to be permitted to speak a word in thy name!

September 22.—I was thinking to-day, What is sin? It is a turning out of the presence of God, and departing from union with him; drawing back from the attraction.† While that is kept up, no sin is imputed. Many blunders may be made; but while the heart keeps attached to Jesus, cleaving to him by faith, these words stand good, "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." The will being still fastened to his cross, all that is wanting is a closer attention to the Spirit. Then these blunders would be rectified. My one concern must be, to keep in this presence of God, lying before him as clay, and he will do all his will in me.

September 30.—I have found it on my mind some time, that something more should be done for the souls in the lower part of the town. We have had preaching there, and prayer meetings, and yet they seem all dead and cold. Sally thought of several persons, and we got the names of twenty-eight families. We both laid it before the Lord, considering that our good class, which meets on Tuesday night, were all raised at first by inviting them

* But the call to "repent and believe the Gospel" must be first obeyed.—Ed.

† St. John tells us, "Sin is the transgression of the law; the law written in the heart," or recorded in the word. But Mrs. Fletcher evidently means, How does sin revive in those believers *who were dead to sin*? In this view of the question, the remarks that follow may be profitable.—Ed.

to a meeting. We proposed to do the same with these. But Sally did not feel freedom to meet them. At night, in prayer, the Lord laid it on my mind to take this meeting also. Therefore she and I set out in faith, determining to call on as many as my strength would reach. We saw much of the Lord all the way. I have got a promise from all we have asked, which is fifteen. We visited many more, but did not see the time come to ask them. We have many still to go to. I have appointed ten o'clock on Tuesday morning for this new meeting. The Lord pour his blessing upon it! I was pleased to find some old ones, on whom my dear husband had spent much labour, seemingly without fruit, now begin to feel, and they attend the public meetings.

October 8.—The following observation was blessed to me as I read it this day. "There is among men here on earth, an almost infinite diversity of gifts, talents, knowledge, inclinations, &c. The scale of humanity rises through innumerable steps, from the brute man to the thinking man. The progression will continue no doubt in the life to come, and will preserve the same essential relations; or in other words, the progress which we shall make here in knowledge and virtue, will determine the point from whence we shall begin our progress in the other life, or the place we shall there occupy."* What a powerful motive to excite us to grow continually in knowledge and love! The Judge of all will *render to each according to his works*; according to the use he hath made of his talents; and *to him who hath, shall be given*. It follows that the degree of perfection acquired in this life, will determine in the life to come the degree of happiness or glory which each individual shall enjoy. Certainly, the degrees of glory will be as various as the degrees of holiness have been; and therefore we have the clearest reason to suppose there will be an eternal advance from one degree of perfection to another. And because the distance between created beings and the uncreated Being is infinite, they will tend continually toward supreme perfection; though without ever arriving at it.

November 12.—My soul has for some days been in a

* This may be admitted, if the blood of Christ have previously removed all guilt.—Ed.

particular exercise ; but I was enabled not to regard the violent suggestions of the enemy. I strove to pass over, or through the thoughts, as they presented themselves, and took refuge in the Lord. O, how important it is not to give in to one thought ! The least turn of the eye of the mind may be sufficient to let in the tempter. It has been an amazing trial ! Truly *we wrestle with principalities and powers* ! In the midst of it the Lord said, *I have redeemed thee : thou art mine* ! Sometimes it seemed as if I had lost all strength. I could not feel condemnation, and yet I would fain have condemned myself, for I hardly knew what thoughts were my own, and what were injected. But, strange to say, during this season, though I almost trembled to speak for God, my words seemed to be attended with more than common profit to others ! Lord, awaken the spiritual powers of my soul ! This day I have been renewing my solemn dedication to the Lord. On this day I took my dear husband, now in glory ! And I will ever consider it as my day of marriage with the Lord.

January 1, 1791.—Last night I found much desire that I might awake so as to devote the first breath of the new year to the Lord ; and I found it in some measure. Between five and six I got up, and read the Psalms for the day, but did not find any thing particular, except that word, which has remained on my mind, “ Salvation belongeth unto the Lord, and his blessing is on his people ! ” My soul is waiting on him, and my expectation is alone from him.

April 20.—The posture of my soul is, I still wait in full reliance that the Lord will do his whole will upon me. Souls come forward, and it seems as if every one grows faster than I do. I am much pained that I do not feel more under the means. It seems as if the word preached had a more powerful effect on others than on me. Lord, why is this ? Reading is to me the greatest of means, except private prayer. I think the Lord is giving me to see myself in a clearer light than ever.

July 13.—Mr. Valton’s* visit I have found blessed to me. His word came with power ; and while we were talking together of faith, I felt my soul refreshed. O how

* A travelling preacher and a member of the Methodist conference ; now with God.—Ed.

clearly could I see the way for him ! and that all his trials arose from his not believing more,—from his not claiming the privilege of his state. Just then I saw clearly for myself also. O my Lord, let thy light ever abide ! God is faithful to do for us all we trust him for. Well, I trust to be kept from all sin—from all departure from God ; and I find it is to me according to my faith.

Last night at the intercession I was not able to speak one word, having such a hoarseness as I never had in my life before. I once attempted to pray, but could not, so I was silent all the rest of the time. I looked on the congregation, who were all expecting me to speak to them, and could not even say, I love and pray for you. And it may be, the Lord is about to take this power from me. My eyes fail ; my hand is weak with a rheumatic pain, and I can write but little. My feet fail ; I can now walk but a short way. My breath is short, and if my voice be also taken, then I have no more to do, but to care for my own soul and others in silence. Well, I am quite content, and am as willing to be silent as to speak. O thy dear will, my Lord, let it be done for ever !

July 15.—Reading Mr. Valton's experience, I was yesterday much struck to see the difference between him and me, and my soul has this morning received a fresh conviction to offer up every thought in a deeper manner than I have ever done. Lord, thou art faithful to keep that which is committed unto thee. I here commit my every thought, with all the powers of my imagination. Lord, keep them in one constant going out after thee !

August 11.—This has been a very solemn week to me. It was six years last Friday since my dear love began to be ill. This year, each scene falling on the same day of the week, as well as the year, brings all afresh before me. Last Sunday was the awful day in which he took his last leave of his Church and people, and began to die in their immediate service ! It was our quarterly meeting at the Wood. I was in full exercise all day, and felt my spirit deeply resigned, and a good deal drawn out in the Lord's work, though it was a suffering time. Each day I have passed through every scene, and had some calls to take up other crosses, and to be much employed for the Lord. I feel he sustains me, and gives me to say and

feel, *Thy will be done!* Last Lord's day I felt a stirring up in my soul, with an encouraging hope that I should yet be brought into a closer walk with God than ever. Yesterday was a day of more than common recollection. I seemed to bear in mind the nearness of Jesus, and felt all good come from him. I find we have nothing to do but keep uniting our mind to him by faith and love; and if we keep *the tree of life*, we shall be sure to have *each fruit in its season*.

August 17.—Last Sabbath was the day which closed the sixth year of my dear love's inheritance in glory. I had many outward calls all day in the work of God, and found support and comfort therein.

"What cannot resignation do?
It wonders can perform!
That powerful charm—*Thy will be done!*
It lays the loudest storm."

November 15.—It is a great cross, this change in our ministry. Mr. H. going away, now we were so settled, is a trial. Lord, undertake for us, and order in the way thou pleasest. Only let me do as my dear husband ever did, sink under every humiliation and cross, and rise by all nearer to thee! I long to be more abundantly *the temple of the Holy Ghost*. I feel it is a *narrow way*. But O, keep me ever under the atoning blood. I cast me thereon, I rest alone on thee!

I shall now make a few observations.—First, I must observe, I have been led all the way through my pilgrimage by an exercise of faith in a very particular manner. Two great promises have been given to me, on which the Lord hath made me to hope. One in which spiritual and temporal blessings are united; and the other relating wholly to spiritual things. The first was sealed on my heart in a time of particular trial, at Laytonstone, "If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up; thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. Then shalt thou lay up gold as the dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brook; yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver." "Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; and the light shall shine upon thy ways." This promise hath supported me through the

rough path in which I was called to walk. But the words of the apostle, impressed on my mind when I was seventeen years old, viz., "If she have lodged strangers; if she have brought up children; if she have washed the saints' feet; and diligently followed after every good work,"—the Lord has enabled me also to attend to. After all my wanderings, *I am returned to the Almighty; and he hath built me up. Iniquity, glory be to God! is put far from my tabernacles.* My beloved nephew is brought to the Lord. My family are pious and upright; nor have I any thing to lament under my roof, as displeasing to God. My prayer seems to have free access to the throne, and the speedy answers amaze me! I wished for a large commodious place for the people to meet in, as their number greatly increases, and though it seemed impossible, it is now accomplished. I wished for a hundred pounds to build a meeting house at the Bank, remembering how much my dear husband desired it. Laying it before the Lord, that word was again applied, "Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; and the light shall shine upon thy ways." I subscribed thirty pounds, and have now the whole sum ready before the ground is prepared to build it on. I desire nothing, in earth or heaven, but for the glory of God. I feel the *Almighty is my defence*, and to confirm my faith in spiritual things by temporal, he does give me *great plenty of silver*.

The other great promise of my life was, "Thou shalt walk with me in white; I will make thee worthy." Lord, how far is that accomplished? O shine on thy poor creature, and let me clearly discern and make known the work of thy hand! Thou art the author of all good.

That salvation I experienced at Hoxton was certainly a drop from the living fountain; but I had not then a full discovery of sin. Since that time, O what a depth of iniquity, what huge mountains of ingratitude have I mourned over! I once thought I could not set down on a level with the greatest outward sinners. In repeating those lines,—

"O might I as the harlot lie,
As those dear feet transfix'd for me!"

I have stopped and thought—I fear I am not right. I

cannot feel myself *the chief of sinners*. I cannot repent of the sins which (through preventing grace) I have not committed. But, alas! the sight I have had of inbred sin; the base departure of my heart from a close walk with God; and the depth of self and pride I have there discovered, is in my eyes more dreadful than outward transgression. I have sometimes looked on those sinners universally despised by men, and felt in my heart that I preferred them to myself, while the depth of "that carnal mind which is enmity against God," struggled for the mastery. In these conflicts of soul, how often have I thought, if I did but know there was as great a sinner as myself before the throne, who nevertheless had been here filled with the fulness of God, after all that he had felt and done, it would bring a heaven into my breast! How often have I wept over those words,—

"If so poor a worm as I
May to thy great glory live."

I feared, though the Lord was gracious, that I must not look to be saved, except *as by fire*; and that I should never bring that honour to God which my soul desired. But now, glory be to God! that fear is done away. I seem to have forgotten myself! I am wholly taken up with Jesus! The more I look at him, the more my faith increases. He applies to my heart these words, "The sin of Jacob shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the iniquity of Israel, and it shall not be found." He hath shown me the way to rise above the mountains of inbred sin. He hath enabled me *in hope to believe against hope*, and so come nearer to our great pattern, "the father of the faithful, who staggered not at the promises, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God!"* He is the author and the finisher of my faith! Yes, he will make us worthy. I sink into nothing, and look at the *Lord my righteousness*, and I feel those believing views are transforming views; and the more entirely I abandon myself into his hands, the more permanent is my peace.

I now praise the Lord, "that where sin hath abounded,

* O that all who feel their spirit oppressed in beholding these mountains would take this way! How soon would they all sink into a plain!—Ed.

grace doth much more abound." The clear light I have into the mysteries of redeeming love, causes my strains of praise to run the higher. Yes, they shall love him most who have most forgiven! I do not know that I ever feel my will and affections depart from him. I feel a child-like simplicity; and a purity which, it seems to me, my very outward person must express. Yet I am always committing blunders, and even showing roughness; when really there is nothing but love. I used to feel just the contrary. I used to strive to act as a Christian; but it was a constraint; and though, by the power of God, I kept within the line, yet it was not free and natural. Now I often feel, if I could be turned inside out, I should bring more glory to God than I do. But that there still should be these blemishes in my deportment deeply humbles me, and for inward and outward defects I cry,—

"Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy death!"

One day, lamenting before the Lord that I did not in my conversation more adorn the truth, it was brought to my mind, that gold must be kept in the fire till purified from all dross; and that even then it would be liable to be sullied. For that, however, a rub would suffice. This was very different from the purification it needed at first. I must ever be ashamed before him! and if any one ignorantly ascribes any thing to me, it gives me a pain I cannot express. Yet I think that word is more exemplified in me now than when I was at Hoxton, (though I then used the same expression in a lower meaning,) "I live not, but Christ liveth in me." I now, however, discern such a vastness therein, that I am constrained to cry out,—

"A point, my good, a drop, my store,
Eager I thirst, I pant for more!"

I am not led to speak much of my state; I am more drawn to a quiet waiting on Jesus; but on this occasion I feel a call from the Lord to give my last testimony to his faithfulness. I sit at my Saviour's feet. "I am poor and needy, but the Lord careth for me!" Therefore "I am not afraid for any evil tidings, for my heart standeth fast, believing in the Lord." I think I discern the near

approach of dissolution, and am daily made sensible of decay.* But swelled legs, short breath, and other morbid symptoms, give me no dreary prospect. The will and order of God is my choice, in whatsoever way it manifests itself. Sometimes it is suggested that I shall be called to endure great conflicts in death, both outward and inward. Well, I have no care about it. Once I wished to be able to express some joy in death, in order to encourage those I leave behind. But now I see things in a different light. My life hath been a life of backslidings and unfaithfulness. I know not, therefore, what kind of death will bring most instruction to others, and most glory to God. All is in his hand, and all my prayers are lost in this, "Father, thy will be done." I feel a bleeding wound from the loss of that dearest and best of men. But I am conscious he is not dead! No; he that "believeth in Jesus shall never die." And the will of God is so dear to me, I rejoice it is done; though against my tenderest feelings. He is wise, and I kiss the rod. I admire and adore! I have communion with my dearest love before the throne! He waits for—he beekons me away! I rest in the will of God; and at this moment

"Not one wave of sorrow rolls
Across my peaceful breast!"

I have found of late much comfort in those words, INFINITE WISDOM! INFINITE POWER! INFINITE LOVE. O, my God! Thy infinite wisdom swallows up all my choice! Thy infinite power forbids my fear! And thy infinite love makes all my own!

And now I know this day in my heart and in my soul, that "not one of the good things hath failed me, of all the Lord my God hath spoken!" Therefore, looking for salvation and victory alone "through the blood of the Lamb, and the word of our testimony," I conclude with Simeon's words, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

* How true is that word, *Life is yours, and death is yours*—all shall be ordered for your good! She lived twenty-four years after this time.—Ed.

PART THE SEVENTH.

EXTRACTS FROM HER JOURNAL.

WE have now gone on with Mrs. Fletcher, from the time when in early youth she obeyed that call of God, "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." We have seen her, like the great father of the faithful, "go forth and follow the Lord, not knowing whither she went." We have seen her pass through the wilderness of cares, and fears, and sorrows, "leaning upon her beloved;" not forgetting, however, his warning voice, "Remember Lot's wife." We have beheld her wading through the depths of self-knowledge, made manifest by the law, and the painful process of which is so strikingly displayed in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. We have travailed with her in birth while she groaned oppressed with the "carnal mind," yet thanking God, and not despairing of deliverance, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." We have anticipated the victory while she "encouraged herself in the Lord her God." We have seen her struggle, not in vain, till the opening heaven, displayed in the eighth chapter of that glorious epistle, claimed and received her whole heart! We have seen this Divine process continue, without any of those unscriptural abstractions or subterfuges which have obscured or deformed "the work of the Spirit" in other devoted souls. What remains but to see if she carried her blessings through the trials of her remaining years? If she maintained the same undeviating path? If she held fast simplicity and love in all her intercourse with her fellow creatures? If she continued to "deny herself daily, and take up her cross?" If she persevered to the end of her race, "trusting in the Lord, doing good unto all, and especially to the household of faith?" An extract from her journals, which

are very copious, will furnish us with a clear, and, we hope, not a tiresome answer to these very important questions.—Ed.

January 1, 1792.—This has been a solemn day. At the sacrament I gave myself afresh to the Lord. At night we renewed our covenant;—my soul strove for a perfect dedication. It is the last time, I suppose, that Mr. and Mrs. Horne will be with us on this occasion, which added to the solemnity.*

Friday, 6th.—A day of solemn prayer in many parts of it; yet much temptation and distraction at others. O how does my soul long for the full union! I feel a fixed reliance on Jesus, and an increasing desire after him. “O tell me, thou whom my soul loveth, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon!” I long after thy meridian brightness. This day ten years I came first to Madeley, and my dear husband led me through the house. We prayed together, and gave ourselves up into the hands of the Lord. What have I seen since that time! Well, blessed be the Lord, I am nearer to him, and more free to serve God, both inwardly and outwardly, than I was that night. But I want to be a meet partaker with my dear, dear, holy husband, now in light! I want to feel a fuller degree of the spirit in which he lives! Lord, thou hast said, “Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” Are we not still one? Thou knowest, O Lord, our union was far more in the spirit than in the flesh; and

“Can death’s interposing tide
Spirits one in thee divide?”

Surely no. O then make me “a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light!”

7th.—Received to-day a striking conviction how careful I ought to be not to expose the fault or infirmity of any one. I want so to love my neighbours as to feel *all* their concerns as tenderly as if they were my own. When I err in the least from this I feel the Lord’s rebuke.

12th.—A day of recollection. I prayed last night that I might not offend with my tongue all the day. I knew I should be exposed to some hurrying circumstances, and

* Mr. Horne, curate of Madeley, was then preparing to go to Sierra Leone, as chaplain to that settlement.—Ed.

I pleaded in faith that there might not come one word out of my mouth that I could have a sorrowful thought for ; and, blessed be his holy name, I have found a constant sense of a Divine monitor warning and keeping me the whole day. Yes, thou hast answered my prayer, glory be to thee, O Lord ! I have this day also found a sweet idea of Christ's condescending love, and gentle manner in reproving his disciples. And is not his heart the same in heaven ? Yes, it is ! "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Then he does pity and bear with me ! Yes, his blood hath atoned for all.

"Jesus protects ; my fears begone !
Who can the Rock of ages move ?
Within thine arms I lay me down,
Thine everlasting arms of love !"

25th.—Last Saturday Mr. Horne and his family set out from our house for Sierra Leone, the place of his mission in Africa. For three weeks we have been a good deal taken up in helping them to prepare for this great undertaking. I found much of the approval of God in all we had to do, and a delight in the thought that so poor a worm can in the least contribute toward what appears so much for the glory of God. The next day was solemn. Mr. Gilpin kindly assisted us, and encouraged us to believe we should not suffer for what we had given up in obedience to God's order. His sermon was attended with unction. In the afternoon he was obliged to leave us, and return to his own congregation. I had a meeting in our room, as there was no service in the church. There was a weight on my spirit. I now missed my dear husband. Our being without a minister may cause many disagreeable things ; and I alone feel the burden. Here is no Mr. Horne, thought I, to consult with. However, we had a very sweet time ! The Lord was present in a more than common manner. I felt liberty and freedom to speak, but we were greatly crowded. Numbers went away for want of room, at which I was grieved. Lord, direct us in all our ways !

There is a good spirit in our people ; they feel the loss of their minister, and yet seem resigned to the will of God.

March 4.—Since the above I have passed through various scenes. Our room being too small for the Sunday

congregation, I thought it a call to go to the Dale, and believed the badness of the roads was not to hinder. But the Lord has been pleased to visit me with illness, and has quite confined me to my room. I found much peace in the Divine appointment. One day the doctor told me he thought my case very bad; and I had reason to believe I was very near my Father's house. I felt all my soul acquiesce in the Divine disposal; and though I had no particular joy, but rather darts from the enemy, nevertheless I felt my soul lie down as it were on the will of God, as on a soft pillow. Soon after it appeared I should, for a time, be better. All was still right. O the blessing of having a God to trust to!

I am now again enabled to attend the meetings, and I find an increasing power and freedom; but we are still without a minister, which causes many difficulties. Every day, and almost every hour, things occur to make me feel afresh the want of that shepherd who so naturally cared for our souls, and so tenderly led this flock for such a number of years. But I feel a pleasure in the cross. It is a favour, a great favour, to suffer any thing for my God. A new ministry has something awful. Should it be carnal, what a pain will it be to me to see my dear's pulpit so occupied! Should he be a spiritual man, yet perhaps he will not agree with the Methodist preachers, and that will cause dissensions, a thing unknown at Madeley as yet. But in all I stand still, determined to be well pleased with all that the Lord provides. Should there be a disagreement, I must bear the weight on both sides. O thou great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, I hang on thee! I hide me in the cleft of thy side, and, as it were, wrap me in thy will! Crosses are very profitable. I have one foot in the grave, and often but a rough path. It reminded me of a dream I had when about twenty-three, before my soul had lost that liberty it got at Hoxton. I thought I was looking through my breast at my heart, and it appeared very smooth and white. Presently I saw the finger of a hand with something like the blade of a penknife. It began to scrape; immediately all was rough and brown, till after a time I saw one spot like white velvet. Then it was spoken to me, You must endure that circumcising knife till the whole is like that spot! There was

a great change at that time, and a real renewal as far as it went. But when afterward the keen and close knife was laid to, all appeared rough. O let me endure till thy whole will is done! O the perfect atonement! Yes, *the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin!* When a room is dark, let in the sun and it is light. Yet there is no light from the room, it is all in the sun. So the soul, uniting itself to Christ by faith, is made pure by that union, and kept pure by the continuance of it. As I was pleading that word to-day, "In this is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit," I thought, it is only union with Christ that can make me fruitful. I had a glimpse of that union, and saw it was all free gift. Therefore I may ask and have the fulness of the Spirit! Hallelujah!

June 22.—What cause have I to trust in the Lord! On May 31st Mr. Walter came to reside. Nearly five months I had the cross of being without a minister, but now the Lord hath provided one, who I trust will prove *a man after his own heart*. I have only to stand still and see his salvation in all, and my spirit finds rest in so doing. I have of late had some very comfortable seasons in speaking to the people, and much of the presence of God. I have had a dream, from which I derived some profit. I seemed to be assaulted by Satan. Immediately I saw a man at a distance, partly covered with a cloud. He seemed to take no notice of me for a long time; at last he came up to me. As he drew near, Satan fell back. The man laid his hand on my arm, and said, "Be strong." On which I felt a strength go through me I cannot describe. He then returned to the same spot, and seemed to take no more notice of me. After a time the enemy came again, and struggled hard with me. I often looked toward the man, but he appeared to take no notice. When my strength was almost gone, I raised my left hand and weakly put it against the enemy, saying, *The Lord Jesus bruise thee beneath my feet* from this time for ever! upon which he fell flat to the ground. The man behind the cloud then said, "Do you hear that? Do you all witness it?" To which a great number of voices, as in a musical note, answered, We do! we do! we do! They seemed above me, around me, and on every side! And their voices were so loud the sound awoke me. It seemed to point out, to me two

great truths. First, That at those times when the Lord appears not to answer as my soul could wish, I am still to see him as looking upon me, and equally trust him when he does or does not speak. Secondly, That we are continually in the sight of the eternal world. Indeed this I always knew; but I felt it more deeply impressed. I seem peculiarly conscious of the presence of the heavenly host, and would act, think, and speak, with the deepest reverence.

August 16, Thursday.—On Tuesday last was the anniversary of my dear husband's death. Seven years have passed since that awful scene. Seven years has he been in glory! And I, a poor mournful widow, walking below through my pilgrimage alone. But what mercies have I seen in those seven years! O, had I at first known I should have stayed so long here, it would have looked very sad. But I feel more and more we are to live the present moment, and I find help and strength is given for every hour. It was a solemn but good day to me. My husband seemed unspeakably dear and near to me; but the love of the will of God kept me all day above every painful feeling.

September 12.—This summer I have been much called to speak in the name of the Lord; and such a way has been made for me, as to weather and conveyance, and various circumstances, that it fully convinced me I have no need of care. O how sweet is that command, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee!" I do not know also that ever I felt such help and liberty from the Lord in all my life, as I have done in speaking this year, both winter and summer, at home and abroad. It is a cross to the flesh, but, glory be to thee, thy light doth shine on my ways.

This day I am fifty-three years old. O that I may from this day begin a new life! Once more we are free from company; and I am led to give myself more abundantly to private prayer. Since we have been alone, a deep conviction has rested on my mind of the shortness of time, and how little longer I may retain any degree of health. Therefore I determined to seek for an increase of the Spirit to unite me more to himself, as he sees good, so I may but glorify him. I seem to be threatened with a

cancer, and rather seemed to shrink at the prospect. But it may be the answer of my own prayer ; and I still say, Only make me holy !

October 4.—I was led this morning to offer up my whole self to God. First, My body, for any suffering he saw good. I leave it all to him. If any means are to be used, I believe the Lord will himself direct what shall be done. Secondly, My reputation, to be esteemed or despised. Thirdly, My substance, to be continued or withheld. Fourthly, My soul, I commit it altogether to the Lord. He knows I want to be fully saved ; and I will consider it as my *one* business. Lord, get thyself glory upon me ! The other morning I was awaked by those words powerfully impressed,—

“O glorious seat, thou God our King,
Shalt thither bring our willing feet !”

Last night those words were precious, “With favour will I encompass them as with a shield.” My spirit seems to long for a closer communion. I have thought on those words, “If any man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” I see I must apply myself more to “do the will of God,” watching each word and thought, and taking up every cross with cheerfulness.

October 12.—I have been reading over, with deep attention, the Life of Mr. David Brainerd. O what a deep-searching book have I found it ! Many times before have I read it through, but never so entered into the spirit of it as now. He observes, it was always his heaven to do the will of God, from his first conviction ; and he could never rest, but in doing something for the Lord, even when death was upon him ! Lord, make me to be of that mind ! To have our happiness in doing and suffering the will of God, is indeed the strongest assurance the soul can have of future glory. For, can any thing separate God’s will from himself ? Neither life nor death can then divide the soul from his eternal presence. Glory be to God, I feel some little measure of this spirit. My delight is, that the Lord reigneth, and my rest is in his will. As I was thinking the other day, perhaps I may be called to have the cancer cut out of one breast, perhaps out of both, as there is pain in the other, and formed the idea

of the handkerchief tied over my eyes, and my arms bound to the chair. As I was offering myself up to the will of God, I felt these words applied, "I am ready not only to be bound, but to die for the Lord Jesus."

On Monday morning I had a peculiar sweetness on my spirit in meeting the people; and at night I read and spoke from the 21st of Matthew. It was a good time, and some souls were blessed. On the Tuesday, being our intercession, I do not know when I have found such liberty. The Lord was very present, and a deep solemnity rested on the congregation; some of whom have since told me the Lord wrought much on them that night. Blessed be God, he still gives me to bear his message to the people. O that my little remaining strength and time may all be devoted to him. Yet I have of late been much tried with such a stupor upon me in the morning, that I cannot rise till near seven o'clock. This pains me much. Lord, make me more active in thy work! I have since observed some answer to prayer, with regard to rising in the morning; Lord, give me to persevere!

November 1.—The Lord give me to abound in charity as to the outward act! But where is the difficulty of being so, when the Lord hath made my cup to run over? If ever my charity was great, it was when I had little, expecting a prison for myself, while I was helping others. Yet at that time I am not sure it was *cheerfully done*; a necessity seemed laid upon me. But now, though I give much, and am much employed for the poor, yet I fear I do not save all I might for them out of what is spent on my worthless self. How has the Lord appeared for me! Another's grace, another's wisdom, another's management! My father's and husband's money all devoted to my service! all gathered together to serve me! While these thoughts came rolling over my mind, those words presented themselves, "When I sent you without purse or scrip, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing."

November 13, Tuesday.—Yesterday concluded eleven years since my dear husband and I were made one. It was a solemn day to me. I strove to renew my marriage covenant with the Lord; but it was a day of gloom; I had no near access. Much of it was employed among the people, as Monday usually is. In the morning meet-

ing I had some liberty, and more at night, while reading and speaking on the 12th of the Hebrews.

December 1.—I was much encouraged in considering that it is the office of Jesus to “baptize with the Holy Ghost.” How is it we so neglect to look for the fulfilment of that office of our Lord! Did he not say, “He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water? And this he spake of the Spirit,” which they who believe on him were to receive. This gift of the Holy Ghost is therefore the very thing believers are to look for. No matter what they call it—a clean heart, salvation from evil tempers, purity, or what they will—it makes no difference. There is a baptism of the Spirit for believers to receive, and which I have had a taste of; but I want the fulness. The Lord is faithful—it shall come. Yes, I see it, I come near it, I feel a touch of it while writing; yet my faith wants a farther lift. Lord, it must be all thy own doing!

December 2.—I was talking yesterday with one who told me many were much alarmed about the nation. That inflammatory papers were throwing about among the army, and it is feared they will raise among them such a spirit as reigns in those of France. I was led to consider that and various other things which appeared to me as signs of the times. At night I felt much liberty in pleading for our good king, and that God would restrain the evil ones, who are striving to raise a spirit of ingratitude and rebellion in our nation. I felt comfort in my old word, “The Lord reigneth!”

December 11.—This has been on the whole a good day. I cannot say I have found so much liberty in the times of family prayer as I usually have; but in the five times of my private approaches to the Lord I think I have each time had a greater degree of it.

December 16, Sunday.—My spirit pants after God! O Lord, glorify thyself upon me; this is what I long for, and pray for. I seem like a poor beggar waiting at mercy's door; oft full of hope, and then again the door seems shut. I want the spirit of prayer. I want also a more self-denying spirit. Last night I dreamed my dear husband wrote a line for me to read. I took up the paper with desire, and read, “Those who closely follow Jesus

Christ can discern the mark of the thorn in his steps.” As soon as I was dressed, I lighted a candle, and opened the Bible to read, when I cast my eyes on those words, “Seeing Christ hath suffered in the flesh, arm yourself also with the same mind.” I see it. If I would walk with Christ, I must know my path by that very mark. A constant death to my own will. Lord, show me how to walk thus! Give me a steady power to rise the very moment the alarm goes off. To watch against sloth all day, and to use more abstemiousness in my food. I believe this would be good both for soul and body; and I have asked it of the Lord, that Sally may see it in the right light, and not fret and be unhappy when I do not take what she thinks I ought. This is oft a mighty hinderance to me in little mortifications which I would use. I am quite clear I have no right to hurt my body. I am not, I think, in any danger of that. But often self-denial promotes health. I hope to begin to-morrow, a day which we had set apart to pray for the nation, and for the children on whom the Lord had begun to work. I propose to keep a watch over my appetite each day, and this indeed the Lord hath already given me; but to this I would add a *shadow* (for I cannot call it more) of a fast, twice a week. On Mondays and Fridays I would omit butter in the morning, eating dry bread, and as usual rosemary tea without sugar. For dinner, water gruel, with salt and pepper, and, as on other days, tea for my supper. This cannot hurt my health, and may be a kind of remembrancer that there is such a duty as self-denial.

February 9, 1793.—The watch night, the last evening of the year, and the intercession, the first of this year, were both favoured with much of the presence of God, and some souls were a good deal stirred up. Blessed be the Lord, the work does not cease. How melancholy did our situation appear when Mr. Horne was called away! But we are comfortably provided for in a minister. O, how good it is to stand still, and commit all our ways to God! This day my spirit has been waiting on the Lord, and enabled to keep in his presence.

March 20.—This morning I felt a power to ask that I might be kept from grieving the Holy Spirit all the day. I knew there would be much hurry and many distractions.

Glory be to my God! I found Jesus a sweet refuge, and a freedom from all confusion or hurry of thought all the day. The presence of the Lord keeps all in peace. This day I have experienced afresh the fulfilment of my former promise of having *plenty of silver*. Among other things I have had some singular opportunities of helping the Church and the poor, each in small portions. O, how can I praise the Lord sufficiently for such an indulgence! What numbers of his dear children am I enabled to assist! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

March 26.—This morning having some painful thoughts respecting the cancer, I carried them to the Lord. A sweet calm came over my spirit. I could freely offer up all to God. He knows, if I saw my way clear, I am ready every hour to submit to the operation. While I waited in calm and peaceful resignation, that word occurred to my mind, "Can there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" I said, No! it is all in his hand. It can rise no higher than he pleases. I thought, also, if my dear husband was with me, and had power over the complaint, should I be under any concern about it. I answered, No, I should not. My tender partner would direct and help me through all. Well, said my heart, my heavenly Bridegroom is powerful, more loving, more present, than the dearest human friend can be. I have nothing to do but stand still, and he will instruct me in the way I should go. I have *his own* promise, *all shall work together for my good*. Even my mistake, if I am under one respecting this disease, all shall be for good. I am alone, and have none to direct me. Therefore, I give up all to my Lord! and as we order for an infant, so will he order all for me. Whatever is his choice is mine.

April 1.—Yesterday, being Easter Sunday, I felt a desire to give up all my concerns into the hands of God, by a fresh dedication of myself to him at his table. I was much troubled the night before with a suggestion that I ought to have the cancer cut out, and that I should see it so by and by. I ventured to pray that if it were the will of God that I should stand still and wait on him, he would give me a peculiar blessing on the morrow. My prayer was graciously heard. So comfortable a Sabbath

I have not had for years. I gave up soul and body into the Lord's hand, with a firm confidence that he would order for me, as a tender husband for a wife; and when I went to the table I was enabled to consider it as the seal of our mutual covenant, and my faith has ever since found an increase. The marks of death seem to be upon me, and they are a great blessing! I seem continually called to offer myself up as in martyrdom; and so many sweet promises come before me, assuring me of the tender care of my Lord, that I sometimes think never was a creature so safe and so happy.

April 4.—Reflecting this morning on the various ways in which different persons express themselves concerning sanctification, or what is called Christian perfection, I was led to think, may it not be thus expressed—I feel a degree of faith which continually unites me to God, through the atoning blood. “I abide in Christ,” through whom I am always accepted, and I feel nothing contrary to love. Yea, I am far from what I ought to be; and I obey with joy my Lord's admonition, “When ye have done all, say, I am an unprofitable servant.” Being taken into Christ, as a drop of water into the ocean, I lose myself in him, and find in him my all for time and for eternity! Now a measure of this state I do feel; and I feel strong drawings to expect a clearer fellowship—a throwing open the everlasting doors of my soul, and a more powerful entrance of the King of glory!

Saturday 6.—I went this morning to see a sick family lately come into the town, and ill of a putrid fever, of which the father died. O, how dark did I find all those who were recovered! The various places I called at yielded little satisfaction till we came to D. The girl was just on the point of marriage with a pious young man, and every way to her advantage. But instead of this, she is now brought to death's door by a painful and dangerous disorder. She told me she did not find her inclination at all to this world; that she had much rather die than live. She added, “How good is the Lord in all he does! The apothecary gives me bitter medicines to do me good, and I love him for it, though he may mistake and do me harm. But God cannot mistake, and shall I not love him? O, he keeps my mind so quiet I can leave

all unto him. Sometimes I have great temptations, and reason whether I have not brought it all on myself, by taking too hard a place." I observed, But you went there believing it to be for the best? "Yes," she replied, "and the Lord soon comforts me again, if such thoughts come. The other night I dreamed I was dead. I thought I was looking down on this bed, and said, there is the spot on which my crown was brightened, and I have not had one pain too much; and so I shall say when I get to glory." Her words were exceedingly animating to me. When she first met with me among the children, I always observed her deep attention. O, how she has grown in grace!

May 14.—The first Sunday of this month I was at the Dale. We had a crowded house; but I felt such liberty, both of mind and voice, as I but seldom remember to have had. I spoke near an hour from that word, "They shall ask their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward." In the last meeting we had great liberty, blessed be the Lord! On Monday night I found also uncommon freedom at our home meeting, and the congregation was very large. Tuesday's class was also good; but from that time I have been laid up with pains in my head, face, and all over me, attended with a slight fever. During this season I have been led to consider what numerous mercies I am surrounded with! My cup runs over. Though I have not that near access to my God I long for, yet I do feel such safety, such confidence in his love, that I am, in the midst of all, enabled still to say and feel,—

"One only care my soul shall know,
Father, all thy commands to do."

July 1,—Last night a man called, whose daughter lies in this infectious fever which has carried off so many. He said she desired to see Sally, as she was much distressed in her soul, and it was too far off for me to go there. Sally asked me what she should do? Finding her own mind quite free to it as the call of God, I felt it come near, for she is my greatest consolation, next to God, and useful as a right hand. I looked up, and felt the power of these words, "The hairs of your head are all numbered." I said in my heart, If the Lord should

have appointed to take her from me by this mean, shall I say to him, What doest thou? No, I will cling to that word, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." It was suggested, You lost your husband by a putrid fever; perhaps Sally may be taken also by it. But shall I refuse her devoting her life to the glory of God? Shall I hold back the dearest thing I have upon earth from Jesus, who gave himself for me? My soul cried out, No, my Lord, my Saviour, no! I offer up every Isaac to thy will. She went and found the woman under a concern for her soul. All consequences I leave to my God.

I am amazed how free my mind is from care! Those things which used to burden me are now as nothing. I have learned to stand still, and Jesus, my adorable Saviour, takes care of all.

August 14.—This has been a solemn day. And is it indeed eight years since my dearest husband went to glory? What a night was that to me! I was at this hour waiting at his bedside, with my eyes immovably fixed upon his dear, calm, peaceful, dying countenance. I have this day gone through the scene; but glory be to God, in a different manner than when we seemed on the point of separation. Yea, already parted, for he could not show any sensibility toward me. But this day it has been constantly on my mind, as if we thought and did all together. Yes, thou dear spirit, well didst thou say to me in that dream, "I am not dead, I live!" Yes, thou dost live: and I have no doubt hast helped me this day to feel an uncommon peace, such as I sometimes have felt when dreaming, and having, in a peculiar manner, a sense of the presence of heavenly spirits. There are seasons when the mind, joining itself to the Lord, and abiding in that posture, feels a kind of anticipation of the blissful union enjoyed in the realms of light, and has communion, more or less sensible, with the spirits before the throne. Some faint touches of this I have felt this day. At my first waking in the morning, my soul cried to the Lord, that it might be indeed a day of consecration and dedication of all my powers to that God whose I am, and whom I desire perfectly to serve.

December 21.—My soul has for some days been in a peculiar exercise. O Lord, keep me from every snare,

and never let me be drawn into any thing but according to thy will ! I wish to help souls, and to obey thy order ; but in so doing, it is hard to avoid many things disagreeable. Lord, give me a fuller plunge into thyself, that my conversation may be always in heaven ! And the desire to please, or fear of contempt, remove far from me ! O for a single eye fixed alone on God !

The lump in my breast is removed, in a wonderful manner, in answer to prayer ! I could not find freedom to use any of the things I was advised to, only the goose-grass juice, a quarter of a pint twice a day. After some months, the upper lump became less, and is now quite gone, as far as I can perceive ! nor do I find now any pain in either. Glory be to God !

May 7, 1794.—I had some encouragement in prayer last night and this morning ; and I was led to plead that my soul *might be filled with the Spirit*, that my tongue, being touched with the fire of heavenly love, might be enabled to plead the cause of truth in a different manner to that which it now doth.

We have been encouraged in seeing some souls brought in. G. M., for whom we have long waited, sometimes with hope, sometimes with fear, has now found the Lord most clearly. O what a change does grace make ! She is indeed *a new creature* ; and her mouth is open in his praise who hath brought her out of darkness into his marvellous light.

June 4.—What answers to prayer have I seen of late ! My gracious Lord seems to count each hair indeed. When I was at the Dale again last Sunday, he gave such a liberty in speaking as I have seldom experienced. The congregation was very large. As I entered the chapel, the heat was almost ready to beat me back. When I had got through to my seat, the sun lay on it, and there were but a few small openings to admit air. One of these is by my seat, but I observed no air come in that way. It appeared as if my voice must be lost with the heat. I looked to the Lord, and said, My Father, turn the air this way, if thou seest good ! The time being come, I began giving out the hymn, and forgot my prayer. But as I was just ready to faint, such a fine breath of fresh air came in as quite revived me. Then I recollected what I

had asked. The next two lines which I had to give out were,

"For our Shepherd and King
Cares much for his sheep."

O how my heart went with the words, and set to its seal that they were true ! Contrary to what is usual with me, I was an hour and three quarters. My strength held out, and the dear people, though violently crowded, stood like wax work ; and many wished the service had been longer.

An affair which perplexed my mind, I find quite removed by prayer. I can do nothing but in that way. O, my Lord, did ever a soul feel more of that word, *Without me ye can do nothing ?* But I wait for a revelation of Jesus Christ in my soul more full and strong than I ever had.

June 10.—While I was this morning speaking to a backslider, I had such a sight of *the narrow way*, as greatly animated my soul. I see there is no way to keep life and communion with God, but by strictly adhering to the words of St. Paul, "I am determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified." There must be a shutting the door of the soul against any thing else ; not only sin, but any care or meddling with what we are not called to attend unto.

August 1.—I feel my health decline. This very hot summer affects me exceedingly. My legs swell greatly, unless constantly bound with many yards of flannel. I am very weak, and my breath very short. Yet I am enabled to keep all my meetings both abroad and at home, and have found the Lord much with me all the summer in this respect. He gives me out strength for my day. Some remarkable providences have happened lately. I think them worth preserving. A short time since a man and his wife, who lived near some of our good brethren, were by them oft invited to the preaching that has been lately established in that place ; but they turned it off, saying, they had something better to do. When the Bridgenorth races came on, they were preparing to go. R. W. then reminded them of their plea against hearing the word, that "they must mind their work, and had something better to do." But the man said they were determined to go, and have two good days there. In the first day he got so heated that on the second he

came home in a fever, and died the day following! How little did he think, when setting off for the races, that he had not three days to live!

Another awful judgment was as follows: A young man was working with brother Williams in the Forge. He swore in a dreadful manner. Williams reprov'd him, urging the destruction such a conduct would bring upon him. He turned all into ridicule, saying he was a match for the devil. Presently after he went to the alehouse, and got drunk. He then got into a wagon which was going his way. As he sat on the side, he fell backwards, and was taken up dead! O, the little day of life, how eminently precious!

August 14.—Nine years this day my dear love has been in glory! But I have seen much of mercy in this time, and have learned more abundantly to trust in the Lord. All convinces me, in a deeper and deeper manner, of that truth, All my ways are in his hand, and he directs my paths. Though my dear husband seems as dear to me as ever, yet I can praise the Lord for full resignation. Reflecting the other day on the manner I was affected at the awful season of his death, I could not but see in it cause of praise. Though his life or death was the closest thing under the heaven to me, yet each day and hour of that most solemn week, I could never once ask his life, without adding, *Thy will, thy will be done!*

August 22.—I grow very poorly in body. My tabernacle seems taking down. I feel an almost constant fever, with great confusion and dizziness in my head. I can scarcely do any business; and the writing a letter seems to affect me strangely. In this state I have been some months, so that the least exertion wearies me, and gives me pain all over. Yet when the hour of meeting, whether of people or children, comes, I am enabled to get through the duty, and sometimes with uncommon power! Glory be to God! My nights also are very restless, yet I get some sleep, and am not in any violent pain. My Lord does all things well.

September 12.—This day, if my dear husband had lived, he would have been sixty-five years old, and I am fifty-five. I have lived more than half a century. Lord, to what purpose? I know the Lord is still graciously work-

ing in my soul. I feel a more constant going out after God. My spiritual senses seem more awake, and yet I never found it harder to pray when on my knees! The resistance of *principalities and powers* I have been made particularly acquainted with. Indeed it is a narrow way. With regard to outward things, I see nothing but mercy, miracles of merey! Every thing appears so in the hand of God as I cannot express. Even the smallest occurrence in my affairs seems directed of God! I wished, or rather thought, if the room could be enlarged it would be a blessing. And now, on account of the church being taken down, the wardens, in order to accommodate the parish, are enlarging it for the Sunday service to be there. By this means the meeting will be enlarged without any expense to me.*

September 30.—I found this morning, while at prayer with the family, and with the work people who were taking up the potatoes, that the Lord was present. I felt him so. At the time of morning prayer in private, I had also an unusual liberty. I then had a foreign letter to write, in which I sensibly felt the help of my gracious Lord. He rendered some things easy which were in themselves difficult. *O Jesus, thou art made unto us wisdom!* It appears to me, and experience confirms it, that it is peculiarly pleasing to the Lord that we should look up to him for help in the least things as freely as the greatest. He who *numbers every hair* will lead us as a child is led by its mother, and carried in her arms over every difficult path.

December 5.—My soul has been much drawn out lately to ask a close walk with God; more brokenness of heart, and a clearer sight of my utter helplessness. I have found this week that several souls have been blessed. I seem the only dry fleece. The Lord has been pleased that I should suffer some humiliations, which always do me good; yet he is much with me in speaking in his name. This morning, as we were rising, Sally told me what a sweet dream she had in the night. She thought she was meeting the people, and while at prayer she was so over-

* Henry the Fourth, of France, used to say to his great and faithful minister, "Sally, mind my business, and I will mind yours."—
ED.

whelmed with the power of God, and had such a sense of the Divine Trinity entering into and purifying her soul, that she said in her heart, *This is the baptism of the Spirit* which hath purified my heart from all sin ! And such a light shone in her soul, as seemed to bear a clear witness thereto. She thought, I will tell the people, that they may glorify God. Immediately it was suggested, No, stay till you have got through the trials which are before you. She answered, No ; I will glorify him *now* ; and in earnestly pressing the people to seek the same liberty, she awoko. I can never enough bless and praise the Lord for the great favour he hath done me in this dear young woman. She is niece to my honoured friend, Mrs. Ryan ; and truly she partakes of her spirit, and her whole soul seems to be engaged in the work. This has been a day of recollection. I have felt my want, and followed after God ; and I think have found, in some sense, *each thought brought into subjection unto Christ*.

December 24.—Many mercies have I seen of late. Some circumstances of expense occurred, and immediately some increase of necessitous objects followed. I felt this to be a weight. When Sally or myself visited the poor, and beheld great straits, we were sometimes constrained to withhold help, because my calculation would not allow it, though I had cut off what expense I could, according to my best light. This I therefore laid before the Lord, and felt thoroughly content, either to help or not, as should be most for his glory. In a few days I received a letter from my brother, with a proposal so to dispose of a part of my money as was likely to raise me several additional pounds this year. One called also and promised the payment of five guineas, which I had quite given up for loss. In a variety of little incidents I have discerned such a guiding hand of Providence, as hourly confirms the truth of that word, “The hairs of your head are all numbered.”

April 7, 1795.—Glory be to God ! He hath been working on some souls of late ; and I see a spirit of mighty prayer poured on one in particular. Yet it seems as if Satan was striving to bring hinderances among us. Some things, I fear, will cause offence ; in particular this child, whom the Lord hath certainly blessed in a wonderful manner. Lord, keep out all wrong spirits, I beseech thee !

I know the wisdom of men cannot comprehend thy work ; but let no real enthusiasm enter ! Keep us steady and firm, resting only on the sure foundation.

Some days ago I called on Mrs. Yate.* We had a close and comfortable conversation. She told me she had for some months had a very sweet and solid rest ; and all her words in the class had expressed the same. She had been long very poorly, but she had strove to bear up under it without complaint. She now felt her strength fail, and had an almost continual pain in her right side. Her peace, however, continued, and she could leave all to the Lord. She farther observed that she had for some time found such a full sense of the all-sufficiency of God, as she could not express. Shortly after, as she was one night lying awake, she felt a powerful application of that word, "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee." In a day or two more she was confined to her bed, the fever strong, the pain in her side severe, and often forced to rise in the bed to breathe. In this situation she had been several nights ; and this morning she has been confirming to me what she had already observed, that the Lord kept her every moment. I have (said she) never found a shadow of impatience. I can neither eat nor sleep, but I have no desire for either. My strength goes fast, but I feel myself perfectly content with all the Lord's dispensations. I used to feel great fear of death, but I have not any of it now ; and the thought of leaving my children, whom I so much desire to bring up for the Lord, used to fill me with much pain. But I feel strangely free, and can with confidence put them in the Lord's hand, and leave them there ! Her words were to me refreshing and animating. I can bear witness what a pattern of tender conscience and meek submission she has been. She is now better, and I trust will be spared to us a little longer.

May 22.—I had a sweet lesson from the Lord this morning. I was inquiring why I did not hold the blessing of sanctification more steadily ? and it seemed that

* Mrs. Yate was daughter of the late Nathaniel Gilbert, Esq., speaker of the house of assembly in the island of Antigua. He was an intimate friend of Mr. Wesley, and the first preacher of the Gospel to the negroes in the West Indies. *He endured that cross, despising the shame.*—ED.

the Lord answered me, that it was because I forgot the observation I have so often made to the people, of the rattlesnake and the squirrel, till through fear she drops into his mouth.* So when my soul is striving to abide in Jesus, under some peculiar trials, a temptation to discouragement presents itself; I look at it and grow discouraged. Instead of that, I ought "to reckon myself dead unto sin, and alive unto righteousness." In so doing I should "resist the devil, who would soon flee from me." Also, I clearly saw that I should watch in conversation, and never contradict, unless for conscience' sake; remembering that command, "Let your gentleness be known unto all men," as carrying that consciousness, "The Lord is at hand."

June 24.—Glory be to God! I have experienced many very particular answers to prayer of late. For some time past I saw it the call of God that I should go out every Sunday to the Wood and Dale alternately for a time. I feared the heat of the houses, but the Lord took care for that. If the weather was ever so hot in the week, it was always cool on the Sabbath. Blessed be the Lord, he was with us of a truth, and I experienced both inward and outward help beyond my expectation.

August 14.—Ten years this day I have been a widow. Last night I found liberty in pleading with the Lord for the fulfilment of my dear love's last prayer, "Head of the Church, be head to my wife;" and this day I have been renewing my covenant with the Lord to be wholly at his disposal. To abandon my whole self, body, soul, and spirit, with every concern for time and eternity, into his hand. Often I have done this, but on this day I peculiarly love to renew the solemn dedication. I have found a deeper view than ever into the sinfulness of sin,—I mean what an aggravated burden my sins added to the sufferings of my Redeemer! Those words, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price," were impressed on my mind. Then I thought on that word also, "They to whom much is forgiven, shall love much:" and I had some power to claim that abundant love my spirit so pants after. But I discerned so many blemishes in all I have ever done, said, or thought, that I was forced to look to my great Sacri-

* The illustration is good, whatever becomes of the fact.—Ed.

fice. There I could see infinite perfection. "It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell." Casting my eyes on the Bible open before me, it presented the cure of Naaman. I was led from that to consider, how easy it was with the Lord to perform as perfect a cure on my soul as on Naaman's body!

September 12.—Had a good time this morning in prayer. Afterward in reading the account of Prudence Williams, (Magazine, vol. xii,) I was much struck to think how the power of God was seen in her great salvation. In the bloom of youth—a good husband, whom she had been happy with for one year—a fine boy likely to live—affectionate relations—every thing to hold her here; and yet with what noble freedom did she leave *all*, preferring her heavenly Beloved to every earthly joy! It brought to my mind a word given me the other day in prayer, *The glory of the Lord shall arise upon them, and his glory shall be seen upon them.* This day I am fifty-six. O Lord, how little of thy glory has been yet seen upon me! O, let my remaining life be spent to thy praise!

21.—We began the Monday meetings again this morning, which had been stopped a few weeks on account of the women being in the harvest. Blessed be God, they have not lost as much as I feared they would. In this the Lord hath heard prayer indeed. B. T. spoke sweetly; her words animated my soul. And B. B. observed in a very lively manner, what a difference she found between this and former harvests, and plainly described the fruit of the new creature. She was astonished to think what unthankfulness she used to feel. But, said she, every bit I picked up this year, seemed so to come from the Lord! and her heart overflowed with praise and thanksgiving. Poor Jane also gave good proof of a mighty change, though a few months ago an open sinner!

October 8.—The Lord has been in a very particular way showing me the depth of iniquity which hath been in all my life.* O, what a scene! the heights of folly,

* What a mystery is this unveiling of the human heart, to the self-satisfied, self-righteous world! When God discovers to his children, (for to none else can it be discovered,) "by his holy law written in their hearts," not only the iniquity that is manifest there, but all that their hearts are "capable of;" this is a scene

and the depths of selfishness ! What did my Jesus bear for me ! Yes, he hath borne it all. He hath made a full and perfect sacrifice for me ! I can come to him as my full atonement. But I cannot bring him that glory I would, without a fuller change. I seem to have a hold of God more firm and steadfast, and a great expectation from his mere mercy. He hath done the work indeed for me, and I believe he will do it in me. So I shall become the "little child, to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom."

Last night our tickets were renewed. It was a very solemn time. We had four new members. Mr. Baldwin preached on, "Are there few that be saved !" He showed how out of a company of professors, few might be truly in the "narrow way." That it called for the full exertion of all our powers, that we may "enter in at the strait gate." I found it a very sweet season. Afterward while he met the men's class, Mrs. Walter and I had a comfortable conversation on holiness ; and as I was speaking to her, O, how did I see all depended on having the mind stayed on Jesus ! That our one business is, to look at him, our complete Saviour.

Tuesday, November 10.—I awaked this morning with these words,—

"To keep your armour bright,
Attend with constant care,
For ever walking in his sight,
And watching unto prayer."

At my time of prayer, I found a cry in my soul that I might do so. When pleading for the people and the work, that it might be carried on in any way the Lord sees good, I felt my mind divested of any choice. Some slighting things had been said of late by one, with whom I have taken much pains, as if he could now do far better than his teachers ! I brought this to the Lord ; and felt my soul quite willing to be hid and covered in all he called me to, or blessed me in ; and my heart sprang with joy

indeed ! Let those to whom these discoveries are made, take heed that "their faith fail not. The blood of the covenant," and "the great and precious promises," will fully reach their case. This discovery is a needful preparation, in order to their being "cleansed, by faith, from all unrighteousness."—Ed.

at the idea of his Spirit being poured out through any channel. As I was thus hiding myself in Jesus, and enjoying the slighting things thrown out, on what I think a sweet revival which we have had of late, I felt what I know not how to describe,—I saw myself as espoused to Jesus my husband, and consequently one in interest with him. Before I was aware, I cried out, If thou art glorified, I am glorified! Struck at my own words, I stopped; when it came to me with much power, “They that are joined to the Lord are one spirit.” It also followed, they that partake of my humiliations shall partake of my glory. O, how willing did my spirit feel to wait for that day; and such a sight was opened before me of the great blessing of being nothing in the eyes of man, as I can better feel than write.

Last night at the meeting we had a great congregation, and, blessed be God, I felt liberty. Two more notes of thanksgiving were presented for spiritual blessings received. When I came out a person desired to speak with me. She gave me a blessed account how the Lord had given her the full assurance of peace and pardon! and M. D., who came in with her, appears to be sinking much deeper into God. Glory be to his holy name! Many of late are thus brought in, and several are either seeking the great blessing, or do “love the Lord with all their heart.”

November 12.—A solemn sense of the mercies received in these last fourteen years, has deeply sunk into my soul. How different was my state this day fourteen years, when I first became a wife! How tossed was my mind with a thousand fears, not yet fully knowing the “angel of the Church” to whom I was joined; and also encumbered with various difficulties. But now this night there is not one clog left! What a marvellous change! My dear love’s blessing does rest upon me! The Head of the Church is indeed my head; and mercy with overflowing goodness does follow me all the day long. And with respect to the work. O my God! Thou didst not call us to have children according to the flesh; but, what an accomplishment do I see of those words, “Thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.” Yes, I see them coming on every hand,

"Better than daughters, or than sons,
Temples Divine of living stones,
Inscribed with Jesus' name!"

According to my usual custom on my wedding day, I have been renewing my covenant to be all the Lord's; and beseeching him to possess every thought, and to reveal himself more abundantly to my soul. May I from this moment be all activity in following hard after God! I am filled with blessings; O that I may be filled with the spirit of praise!

Monday, December 21.—Yesterday was a fatiguing day to the flesh, but I trust the Lord was glorified among us. In the morning I awoke about two, and being afraid to lose the early opportunities, I could hardly sleep afterward. Between four and five I rose, but was so poorly, I could but think, and offer up my soul in prayer. At the nine o'clock meeting I found the Lord was with us. At half after ten, (as Mr. Walter was from home,) I had to meet the congregation. For an hour and three-quarters I felt much freedom, and some life in speaking, singing, and prayer. In the other meeting, (when Sally had taken that of the two o'clock, in which she had a great company and much of the power of God,) I spoke to about twenty young beginners; and, blessed be the Lord, they came forward. A company at tea, and a private meeting in the evening, seemed to break me down. Between six and seven I retired, and for an hour and a half my soul was refreshed by being enabled to look, by faith, to my adorable Surety now "at the right hand of the Majesty on high," fully set free from all my sins wherewith he had charged himself. I saw him "delivered to death for my transgressions, and raised again for my justification." I had a sweet view how the believer, though weak and feeble, continued thus free. The Saviour "bears the iniquity of our holy things." How true, how sweet is that word, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible!" Yes, he hath said, "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." My soul rested on his satisfaction with peaceful enjoyment, and I fed on those words of the prophet, "And he shall build the temple of the Lord." Yes, I depend on thee, "my Priest, my Atonement, my Inter-

cessor," I depend on thee alone to make my soul and body "the living temple of the Holy Ghost."

January 4, 1796.—This year has begun with a solemn sense of eternity on my soul. On the first day we had the covenant with peculiar solemnity, and many were blessed. On the third Mr. Walter preached in my room on, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground.* It was a precious time.

January 5.—This day I have been fourteen years in Madeley. It seems but as yesterday. What crucifying scenes have I passed through! Yet not one too much. No, my adorable Lord, *thou hast done all things well!*

April 27.—Reading a little diary of dear Mrs. Yate, has been as marrow and fatness to my soul. It searched me deeply. O how much earnest agonizing do I discern in her soul! And yet she is ever complaining of sloth. O my Lord, what am I? Yet I feel the Lord does keep me more steadily looking to himself. But I do not get into the full rest I want, every moment feeling an all-sufficient God.

Tuesday, May 11.—These words were powerful:—*They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.* But I did not continue on my diligent watch. Some useless thoughts crept in; and though I have been striving most of the day, I seem as if I could not feel as I did yesterday. O Lord, heal me! Thou knowest my unfaithfulness, and thou alone canst make me what thou wouldst have me to be. A circumstance occurred yesterday which I found good. One who came to me told me some things that had been said, which to nature would be grating, and once would have been a great trial. But I found power to embrace the humiliation, and could share with joy his lot who was "counted a worm, and no man, the scorn of men, and the reproach of the people."

Considering my various complaints, I see death not far off, and it seems my business, and one concern, to bend all my thoughts that way. O, to *awake up after his likeness!* Lord, get thyself glory on me! I pant to be all like thee!

June 10.—Last night for some hours I could not sleep, having much fever. But I found it a good time of pleading with the Lord, that he would glorify himself on me.

I pleaded that blessed word, "They who have much forgiven shall love much."

December 31.—Another year is almost at an end. How is my soul? Lord, what have I gained this year? I feel more liberty in prayer, more hunger and thirst after God; yet only in a small advance to what I would be. I feel an unspeakable nearness to eternity, and a deep sense of its importance. O that I may live to God as I have never yet done! This morning pleading that word, *Whatever ye ask in my name, I will do it*, I felt my confidence increase, and can firmly rely on the word of the Lord. I did, and do now, ask such a state of soul as will most glorify my Lord. I ask to *dwell in love*. It appears to me there can be no witness equal to this. When I dwell, constantly dwell, in the element of love, there can be no room for a doubt. But my hindrance from entering fully into this state, is the want of looking every moment to Jesus. I am sensible I should grow fast if I unremittently kept my eye fixed on him. But since I have more ardently desired this, it seems as if all hell opposed it,* and, as it were, forced away my mind, or brought black clouds between me and my views of heaven. Yet will I persevere; yea, I will hang upon thy word, believing the cloudless day shall come.

January 4, 1797.—Much comfort I have had in meeting the Tuesday class in the morning. They almost every one seem to have renewed their vigour with the new year. O, how did they praise God, saying they had never known such a Christmas! Several of these were, a few months since, strong in the devil's service. They are now rejoicing in the Lord! But poor C. D.—nothing could comfort him. He seemed locked up in dark despair, till at the covenant on Sunday night the Lord set him at liberty. On Tuesday night while he was speaking, how did my heart leap for joy! O, what an answer to prayer! On Wednesday morning the meeting was also very lively, and several seem to have begun the new year in the most solemn spirit of prayer. How many

* The devil knows it is the very thing that will overcome him. It is this alone that will deliver us from that worldly spirit which is the element in which he works. Every thing is little compared to this faith.—Ep.

of these likewise were a few months ago dark sinners ! O, Lord, we hope to see more and more of thy power among us.

March 20.—“ Gracious is the Lord, and merciful.” O, how much of his faithfulness have I seen of late ! More and more do I discover how he orders all for us. Some affairs of late have threatened distress to the nation, and loss to me. But the tender care and wise disposal of the Lord was so set before me, that I was enabled to praise him as I could not have done had not these things occurred. And he made me to know in the end, that he does indeed make *a hedge about me*, and all concerning me. O, what a treasure do I see in those words, “ I will be your God, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty ! ”

April 1.—For some days my soul has been keenly tried by an accusation of the enemy, on account of a former transaction in which it was represented I had injured my neighbour. I cried to the Lord to make it plain if it were so, for he knew it would be the very joy of my heart to make amends. Yet I had reason to think it was a snare of Satan, because when my soul was most drawn out in prayer, it came as a fiery dart that I must first inquire into, and set that matter right, before I could expect a blessing—though it was not possible at that time to do any thing. And so it proved. But it seemed whenever the accusation came, immediately some word of the Lord, or some plain answer, presented itself to my mind. During this trial, which was very painful, O what a view I had of my state by nature ! What depths of pride, folly, and all kinds of evil, were apparent from my infancy. I cannot express what I saw and felt ; but I carried it all to the Lord, and every view, as it came before me, seemed to have the effect of driving me more to the bosom of my God.

April 8.—After the trial already mentioned, I have found a stronger faith, and more firm reliance on the Lord Jesus ; and one day reading that passage in Job xxii, which has so often been applied with power to my heart, I felt it more than ever so ; and looking to some of the marginal references in the great Bible, a sweet light shone into my soul. Meditating on that verse,

"Then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God," I turned to the references, Job xi, 15, "For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear; because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away. And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday. Thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning; and thou shalt be secure, because there is hope. Yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety. Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid. Yea, many shall make suit unto thee." In how many particulars is this already accomplished! But that word, "Thine age shall be clearer than noonday," in the margin, *shall arise above the noon*, was powerfully applied; which gave me to discern a prospect that my old age shall be favoured with a far closer communion than my noon was. O, my Lord, I see the dawn, but I wait for *the Sun of righteousness* fully to *arise on my soul*.

April 18.—Mrs. Walter's death has been much blessed to me. Had I such sufferings to go through, O my God! I could not bring glory to thy cause by patience as she did, unless thou gavest me a fuller change. From the first of her coming to Madeley, I observed in her an earnest upright desire of living to God. As soon as she knew of our private meetings, she inquired into the nature of them, and begged to be admitted as a member; ever showing by her whole carriage that the language of her heart was,—

"Number'd with them may I be
Here, and in eternity."

She had experienced the pardoning love of God before she came into Shropshire in a very clear manner, and often felt a wish her lot might be cast among some people who walked closer with God than any she had yet seen. And when her husband became curate of this parish, she felt a strong impression that her prayer was about to be answered. She loved her children tenderly, and was exemplary in her care both of them and of her household. She had many conflicts with the evil of her heart, yet often telling me what sweet returns she felt in private

prayer: in the practice of which duty she was truly vigilant. She longed for the day when she should find those words verified in her soul,—

“No anger mayst thou ever find,
No pride in my unruffled mind,
But love, and heaven-born peace be there.”

For some weeks, when near the hour of nature's sorrow, she was most sweetly carried on, often declaring she could feel no fear, for the Lord poured in his precious promises, and so filled her with his consolations as to keep her mind in perfect peace; assured from his own mouth, *He would make all her bed in her sickness.*

On Saturday, March the 4th, she was seized with a violent shivering. Then *the enemy came in as a flood*, with that thought, that she must die and leave her dear children. This conflict was severe; but she was enabled, as a true daughter of Abraham, to overcome. From this season her will appeared to be entirely lost in that of God. The next day she was delivered of a child, which died the same night; and soon after she proved to be in a strong fever. Her sufferings were great and long, as she lived to the twenty-first day after her seizure. But she was a pattern of patience and thankfulness. What adds to both her and our trial was, the inflammation lay so on her lungs that we could scarce understand any thing she said. But in this trial also she showed no impatience; and when a blister was brought for her back, (by which she had formerly suffered much,) she looked on it some moments, and said, *My dear Saviour gave his back to the smiters*, and so will I. She constantly declared the Lord was with her; and one day, when my Sally reminded her of that promise, that “the Lord would make all her bed in her sickness,” she answered, “He doth! he doth!” On the Tuesday she told me with tears of love and praise, how very sweet those words had been to her,—

“All thine afflictions my glory shall raise,
And the deeper thy sorrows, the louder thy praise!”

Twice she had a sweet view of the invisible world, and the attendance of many of the heavenly hosts. Of this she would no doubt have told us much, but we could understand but little of her speech. One time as she was

saying, "Hard work, hard work," Mrs. Purton (who was almost constantly with her) said, "What is hard work?" She replied, "To leave the dear children. But the Lord says, *Leave thy children to me, I will preserve them!*" Inquiring one day how she found her mind, her answer was, "I have no will; it seems all lost in God. If he were to give me my choice, I do not know whether to choose life or death. But if the Lord should raise me, I am determined to live more to God than ever, and above all, to be more faithful in private prayer." The last night Mrs. Yate said, Is your mind as calm as ever? She replied, "Quite so." And is Jesus as precious present as he hath been all along? Her answer was, "More so than ever." On Friday, March 24, 1797, she appeared to be just going about eleven o'clock; breathing very hard, as she had done some hours. We went to prayer, and found the Lord very present; after which, as I was looking on her, I repeated,—

"A convoy attends—
A ministering host of invisible friends!
Ready wing'd for the flight,
To the regions of light,—
The horses are come,
The chariot of Israel to carry thee home!"

And in a few moments her happy spirit left this vale of tears, to mingle with the blaze of day! She was in her thirty-third year. Her disorder was such as called for a very uncommon degree of attention and care. And O, how did we see the faithfulness of God! Such friends were raised, and such helps given in the hour of need, as made us say in truth, *He counts our every hair!* My Sally was enabled to be a great comfort to her, and oft did she express it. One day looking earnestly on me, she said, "I have a deal to tell you, but I cannot speak it." When we meet above, she will perhaps tell me of some glorious views, and Divine consolations, wherewith she was favoured, though she could not utter them here.

June 8.—My faith seems increasing. I have clearer views of the fulness of the Saviour, and of the unbounded privilege of believing. Many have observed, "You have what you believed for, and some have made bad use of that privilege, not understanding what it is truly to be—

lieve." But it is still a great truth, "Whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, you receive. God speaks of the things that are not, as though they were." So does faith. It sees the blessing of sanctification, and takes hold of the promise, and cries, *Through Christ it is mine!* I am not in full possession; yet, like a man that has an estate left him, he claims it as his own; and, though opposed, struggles to get into the possession, and does not quit his claim, though often repulsed by him who unlawfully pretends to the right. The believing soul says, It is the will of God that I should feel evil no more,—that is, I should no more let it in, however tempted. It is his will I should always conquer. My Lord tells me in his word, "This is the victory by which we overcome, even our faith." I must therefore use my weak faith, that it may grow stronger, which it certainly does by use. I must hold fast that strong rock. First, "Jesus hath borne all my sins in his own body on the tree;" therefore they are atoned for, and the atonement is mine by believing. Secondly, "Christ is made unto me of the Father, sanctification." He hath by his one offering perfected the whole work needful for the purification of the heart, and this is mine also by believing. He hath received the Holy Spirit to pour it out on his Church,—therefore it is mine, as far as I can believe, and so unite my soul by faith to God. Abiding in him, I am so far sanctified; and by the exercise of this hope, the soul is said (by St. John) *to purify itself even as God is pure*. Not in degree, but in becoming of one nature. The light of the candle is fire, as really as the sun. So it may be said that little flame is as the sun: both are of one nature. The *promise of the baptism of the Spirit* is to me. I claim it. Yea, and my dear Lord hath told me, "Thou shalt walk with me in white. I will thoroughly purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin." I believe it is his will to do it this moment, but the way he hath appointed is faith; that is the appointed channel. "By grace are ye saved through faith." Now as far as faith can lay hold, I have it, and no farther. This is "the secret of the Lord, which is with those that fear him." They turn to Jesus, and find all in him. It is impossible to stand one moment in any state, but by union with the Saviour,—as

the Lord says by Isaiah, "Without me ye shall bow down among the prisoners." And the Saviour, "Without me ye can do nothing."

As I was at prayer this morning my spirit was dissipated, and could not get near to the Lord.* While I waited before him, I felt those words applied, "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." I discerned such a light in the words as I never did before. One of my greatest conflicts has been with idle thoughts about doing that good which is not in my power. I remember an observation greatly blessed to me on this head, by a good man now in eternity: "Thoughts are of two kinds—either the reptile or the winged kind. Either they crawl on earth, as the reptile, or rise to heaven as on wings." This idea has been often blessed to me. But this morning I had such a clear view into the blessing of keeping the mind occupied on spiritual things as encouraged me much. I now feel the power of it; *to the spiritually minded is life and peace.*

November 6.—Blessed be the Lord, I feel him at work in my soul. He hath brought me into a narrow path; and I find his faithful Spirit reproves me many times a day. O the need I feel of watchfulness! I have prayed many times for a tender conscience, quick as the apple of an eye, and in a measure I feel it so. But I want so to put on the Lord Jesus, that my God "may look and love his image there." I feel a sweet love to, and rest in, the will of God, even in those things which come nearest to my heart. But there is a close communion—an intercourse which I have not: Lord, take away whatever stands between!

An observation of a spiritual writer was last night very profitable to me. He says, "The soul who would come to the Lord, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, must begin by believing in Christ as Mediator. But he must force himself to that which is good, however his heart may be set against it. He should force himself to take insults and humiliations for the Lord's sake as with joy; and to exert a *liberty* in prayer, speaking to the Lord as if he had it. Above all, let him force himself to an *as-*

* How little the most edifying reasonings avail when faith is not in exercise.—En.

*assurance of the favour of God :** and shortly the Spirit of God will come upon him, and enable him to do all those things *freely*, from a pure nature within, which now he does by force. But never let him quit his hope, for then sin gains ground. But while a man retains his hope in God, sin dies away." I felt a sweet power all the time of my reading; and that word, that we should "force ourselves to assurance in God's love," was life to my soul. It is always a blessing to me when I resist discouragements to faith.

December 19.—This is the day set apart for a national thanksgiving, on account of the victory gained at sea over our enemies. Blessed be the Lord, he hath hitherto preserved us. But clouds yet hang over our heads. Lord, teach our senators wisdom! Bless our good king, and guide him in every thing, that he may take such measures as shall tend to unite the hearts of his subjects!

We have had several deaths lately around about us. Some of them our own people. That blessed woman, Mary Barnard, is one. She died very happy, declaring to the last that the covenant was signed and sealed with the Lord, and she was his by a marriage bond. She set to her seal, that "the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed her from all sin." She had known the pure love of God many years. Another was our neighbour, W. Weston, who endured a long and heavy affliction with much patience. Sally often visited him, it being too far for me. The night before he died, she was with him: on her return she gave me the following account,—“My soul did praise the Lord to hear him declare the love of Jesus, saying, ‘O, he is precious to my soul!’ On my asking him, Hath the Lord often visited you since I was with you last? He answered, ‘Yes, many, many times. God hath heard prayer for me indeed, and now I long to die.’ We seemed to enjoy a little heaven together, while conversing of many of our dear friends now in glory, ready to welcome him there. I reminded him of the observation which my dear master made in one of his letters from abroad, that perhaps he might (if he should not

* That is, he should resolutely believe that the general declarations of good will, made by the Lord to the human race, belong to him.—ED.

live to return to England,) be permitted to accompany the ministering angels, who should be sent to convey the spirits of his dear parishioners into glory ! He seemed to delight in the thought ! I observed, You are going now, and I trust, by the grace of God, I shall be enabled to fight my passage through, and then we shall meet on Sion's happy shore, there to praise our dear Lord together. Smiling he answered, 'We shall, we shall.' I read those two hymns, 'Come let us join our friends above, who have obtained the prize,' and, 'How happy every child of grace, who knows his sins forgiven.' After conversing some time, I repeated those lines,—

'For you is prepared the angelic guard,
A convoy attends—
A ministering host of invisible friends!
Ready wing'd for their flight
To the regions of light,—
The horses are come,
The chariot of Israel to carry you home.'

He stretched out both his arms, looking upward, as with eager desire, and cried out, 'O, I am longing for that convoy to come for me !' I took my leave of him, saying, I shall see you no more here ; but it will not be long before we meet above. And I pray the Lord may be with you in the dark valley, and sweetly support you with his presence. He caught hold of my hand, and said, 'Farewell ! God bless you for ever, and dear Mrs. Fletcher. Tell her I thank her for all her kindness to me ; but above all, for the prayers she hath offered for me. They have done me much good, more good than my own. May God bless her and bless you both for ever !' " Some others also the Lord hath taken to his bosom, and among them, one out of my own little household. Poor dear Martha Clark, who had lived with me eight years, being ill, left me last August, to try if her native air would restore her. One letter I received from her. In it, she said, her mind was in peace, stayed on the Lord. Not long after, she dreamed she had returned, and that on opening our back door, she saw the Lord Jesus all in white ! who told her he had brought the chariot for her. In the morning she said to her brother she should die soon, for the chariot of Israel was come for her. And so she did on October the six-

teenth, I believe, suddenly. She often repeated that verse of the hymn, "For you is prepared the angelic guard," &c. And frequently would be saying, "When will the chariot come for me?" How solemn is the thought! My family is partly in paradise and partly on earth. On earth I have none but my dear child Sally; but above I have many. Blessed be God for that word, "We shall be gathered to our people." Martha Clark was one who so walked as truly to "adorn the Gospel." While in my house, I do not know there was ever one thing I wished her to put away, or to do, but she immediately complied therewith. In nothing was she worldly minded, but often was ready to refuse any little addition to her wages, when I saw it right to give it to her. She was in many respects truly a pattern of sobriety of mind, and of a quiet spirit.

January 4, 1798.—At the watch night, held the last evening of the year, I was sensible of a deepening of the conviction which I had for some days felt, of the littleness of my grace. In this spirit I began this new year. I do certainly feel God hath done me good in the last; but I see as I never did, the need of a far deeper work, a faith at all times lively and vigorous. I have not such a perfect conquest over my thoughts as I must have to cause a continual sense of the Almighty. I am not always faithful in resisting, if the thought does not appear to be evil. Since the first day of this year, I have more power to watch: Lord, stand by me! Some observing to me, they could not find as much profit from my words and prayers as they did from Sally's, and wondering at it;* I thought, it is no wonder: for I have not such a degree of the Spirit as she has. But I will bless thee, O Lord, that I am permitted to make her way; and will with pleasure do more of the little things of the house, that she may have more leisure to carry thy truth about among souls. She is a faithful follower of the Lamb, and though she has been my orphan to bring up, I now desire to tread in her steps.

September 12.—Fifty-nine years this day have I seen

* They are not to be commended who spoke thus; nor was Mrs. Fletcher's consequent resolution, though admirable, wholly without danger to the young woman.—Ed.

the light of this world ; but never did I see eternal things more important than at this hour. I am led to live one moment at a time, offering up my whole self to the will of God, to be purified by his Divine influence ;—to be just what he would have me to be. Lord, get thyself glory on my soul. I had some humbling thoughts concerning my dear husband. How much more comfort I might have yielded him, often presses hard on my mind. “ O I have much forgiven, let me love much ! ”

Some years ago I was much struck with that observation of Mr. Bridges, “ Where God designs to confer a great blessing, he frequently puts a sentence of death on the means that seem to lead thereto ; as in the case of Abraham and Sarah.” I am sure it has been so with me in various instances. At twenty-four I had a plentiful fortune, but all seemed lost. Yet God said in my heart, “ Thou shalt lend, and not borrow.” I was, however, at that time borrowing of many, my own money being in estates. I feared I should not at last pay all, therefore, for fear of deception, I spoke freely to several of my losses, and especially to those whose money I had on interest. Many said, “ Depend upon it she is not worth ten pounds, for every one makes the best they can of their affairs.” Such a sentence of death seemed to come over all my worldly affairs ! And yet, when God’s time came, how did all turn about ! Now it may be asked, Why does God take this away ? Mr. Bridges gives a sweet answer, “ God gives his blessings in that manner which shall most show that he is God.” Now had my fortune remained unlesened, as it came from my parents, I should not have so clearly seen the hand of God. But, like Joseph, we must sometimes be sold into Egypt, in order to have our promises fulfilled, of becoming “ the sheaf lifted up.” Of late I have feared lest I should look to my plenty more than I ought, and not live by faith. Perhaps to prevent that the Lord hath taken this thirty pounds in France, and fifty pounds per annum in Switzerland ;* and yet I feel no lack.

November 15.—Last Monday, the 12th, was a solemn day to me. That day seventeen years (and on a Monday)

* Lost by the invasion of the French.—Ed.

my dear husband and I were made one before men. We were before made one in the Lord. O that my spirit could more partake of what he feels in glory! I have no doubt that an eternal growth belongs to happy spirits; and sometimes I think he has so long got the start of me, and was so much before me even here, that I fear I shall not be in one tribe with him above. Well, I feel the will and order of God is right, let my mansion be where it will. If Jesus is glorified, I know I shall delight in that.

November 21.—What an awful time do we live in! This Irish rebellion has occasioned the death of thousands. To what distress also are numbers reduced, stripped of all they have, their houses burned, and themselves forced to flee for their lives! But many of our people have been remarkably preserved. I have not yet heard of one of them who has not escaped, though often as by miracle! When I look on these things, I think how different is my situation! I am lost in wonder, love, and praise! O my God, here I sit under my own vine and fig tree, filled with every good thing! Plenty of money for all I want, and some to spare. I say, when I look at these things, I am astonished at the tender mercy of God; and encouraged to believe that he, who thus graciously deals with my poor dying body, will answer every prayer for my soul. Last night I seemed, almost the whole of it, to hear and repeat with sweet power these words:—

“ Still, O my soul, prolong
The never ceasing song,
Christ my hope, my joy, my theme;
His be all my happy days!
Bow my every power to him,
Every thought be spent in praise!”

When I awoke I could not say it—I could not even begin! But no sooner did I drop asleep again, than it flowed as it were out of my heart and lips!

January 15, 1799.—I have found the beginning of this year a very solemn season. O that I may feel, in the course of it, what I have never before felt! On Christmas eve the Scriptures which I read in the meeting were the first and second chapters of Luke; and it seemed to many of us as if we were with Zacharias in the temple, with Mary when the angel Gabriel came to her, with the shep-

herds in the field; and, above all, with the little company in the stable in Bethlehem, hearing the shepherds relate their vision, and Joseph and Mary confirming their faith by a relation of all the wonderful things they had seen and heard! Our hearts exulted also with Simeon and Anna in the temple;* and my soul was led to cry aloud, that all who waited for salvation in Madeley should behold my Saviour!

I was able to go out on Christmas day, but I was ill the rest of the week. On the first day of this year, in the evening, we had a full meeting, and the Lord was with us. We then considered a few questions which had been brought to my mind for that purpose. First, Has this last year been a year of prayer? Have my prayers been serious, fervent, and recollected? Or have I drawn near to God with my lips, while my heart was far from him? Secondly, Have I watched my thoughts, and been much in holy ejaculations? Thirdly, Have I been thankful for mercies received, and attentive to observe deliverances and answers to prayer, remembering that word, "He that offereth me praise, he honoureth me?" Fourthly, Do I feel a deep sense of sin? Do I loathe my sinful self, and cry often, Lord, "cleanse me from my secret faults?" Fifthly, Am I deeply conscious that the root of all sin is in having lost God, and found self in his place? And do I continually see holiness to consist in the being sunk into my own nothingness, that God alone may be exalted in my soul? Sixthly, Does my faith increase? Do I come more freely to a crucified Saviour, seeking all my salvation in and through him alone? Seventhly, Do I keep hold of every promise given me, as I would of a purse of gold, knowing it will be good another day? Do I so look

* A genuine instance of true faith in ordinary life and duty. *Faith*, says St. Paul, *is the evidence of things not seen*; that is, of the *unseen things which God hath revealed*, and of which the Holy Scriptures are the record. These *things* (events, discoveries, declarations, promises, threatenings) are either *past*, *future*, or *spiritual*, and therefore not the objects of sight. This *evidence* (*Ελεγχος*) gives to these *unseen things of God* a present subsistence. Hence this *faith* is said to be *mighty through God*, to *work by love*, to *purify the heart*, and to *overcome the world*. As this *evidence* is more or less clear and constant, so is the *victory*, and so is the consequent *holiness*; the *righteousness*, *peace*, and *joy*. Lord, increase our faith
—Ed.

for the fulfilling of those given me long since, pleading that prayer, "Lord, accomplish the word on which thou hast made me to hope?"

As to my outward walk, Have I watched over my tongue? David says, in Psalm xxxix, "I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth as with a bridle, while the wicked are in my sight." You who work among the ungodly, do you do so? Those words of St. James are very important: "My brethren, be ye swift to hear, and slow to speak." And in the third chapter he calls the tongue "a world of iniquity, set on fire of hell, and setting on fire the whole course of nature." Secondly, Have I watched over my appetites? Has my table been that of a Christian, or that of a beast? A beast only seeks to feed; but a Christian should make his table an act of devotion. "Whether ye eat or drink," says St. Paul, "or whatsoever ye do, do all in the name and to the glory of God." Now this may be done in three ways. First, Some little act of self-denial should accompany each meal, as a check to intemperance. Ask yourself after each meal, In what have I denied myself this time? Secondly, Your table should be a time of godly conversation, if with others; of meditation, if alone. Thirdly, These blessings should raise your heart to thankful gladness, and increase your faith in that Providence, who, by thus providing for your body, gives you a proof how much more he will provide for your immortal soul. To help you thus to spiritualize your meals, use much attention and fervour in asking a blessing and returning thanks.

With regard to my neighbour, Do I strive to be faithful and diligent in my station; obedient to superiors; careful of, and tender to, my inferiors? Secondly, Do I pray and strive to love my neighbour as myself? Do I forgive as I hope to be forgiven? Do I do all I can for the souls and bodies of those about me? If I hear of the death of any neighbour, do I ask myself, Have I ever had an opportunity of warning that soul which I have neglected? Will that soul have a just accusation against me at the last day? Again, let us cast a look on those who are, from among ourselves in this last year, laid up in the garner of God. Have we honoured and served these saints of God? What a blessed opportunity we have

in this of serving the Lord Jesus! For if he takes as to himself all we do for his little ones at any time, how much more in their sickness and death? "For right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." I never hear of the death of a child of God but I ask myself that question, Have I done all I could for that person in every way? Jesus saith, "Make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail on earth they may receive you into everlasting habitations." How many do you think are thus waiting to receive you above? Let us this night awake to diligence. Let us be more earnest in seeking, and we shall be more enriched in finding. Good Mr. Frazer* observes, "Ever since I can remember, proportionable to my diligence in seeking was my finding: nor made I ever any extra aim at God but I got something extra. Also," says he, "I learn that a Christian's assurance, or faith, though it do not at first flow from holiness, yet it is, in its progress, ever in proportion to his holy walk with God." This is a great truth, for "the mystery of the faith" must be kept "in a pure conscience."

February 7.—How many have been called away lately! Three precious souls, three nights running, have I seen brought to the churchyard! The first was brother Brook, one of my dear Mr. Fletcher's first children. He has been a steady walker, but not clearly awakened to the work of sanctification till a few years ago. He dreamed that he heard a voice say to him, John, are you ready to die? He could not remember what he answered, but the purport was that he hoped so. Next day he was rather uneasy, and wished to have the dream again, that he might answer better. Some time after he thought in his sleep he heard the voice again. Then he said, Lord, am I ready? On which such a discovery of the evil of his nature was laid open to him that he cried out, Ah! Lord, I have all to do! I have to begin! From that time he felt a strong desire to be a new creature in the full sense of the word; and began to strive "to take the kingdom by force." But still he did not see clearly the way of faith. One night he dreamed my dear husband came to him, and pointing to a wall, said, John, you must get up above the top of

* A very pious minister of the Church of Scotland.—Ed.

that wall. He replied, Sir, I cannot, it is impossible. Mr. Fletcher answered, Yes, John, you must, or you will perish. He immediately lifted up his heart to the Lord, and began gently to rise, till he was even with the top of the wall, on which he laid his hand to lean, when instantly he dropped down to the bottom, and awoke. This much discouraged him. But a second time he dreamed the same dream, and leaned as before, when he again dropped down. He had many thoughts about these dreams, what they could mean. After some time he again dreamed that Mr. Fletcher came to him, and, as before, bid him rise above that wall, adding, The reason, John, why you fell the other times was because you leaned on the wall. If you but touch it you spoil all. Then he again lifted up his heart in faith as before, and gently rising till he was above the wall, he found himself in a most beautiful place, and his soul in a profound peace. From this dream he saw it was by "looking unto Jesus" that he was to "enter that rest which remains for the people of God." During a very long and painful illness he has been kept in a sweet, calm peace. In the beginning he was much tempted, but his confidence remained firm. In the latter end it was much increased. He said, a few minutes before his death, to a neighbour, "O, Tommy, this calls for much faith and patience;" but added, that his confidence was unshaken. He then cried, "Come, Lord Jesus!" and entered his everlasting rest.

The next night poor sister Smith was buried. She appeared to me more than commonly stirred up the last two or three times I met her in class. In her illness, which lasted a month, she was continually crying out for *a clean heart*; lamenting the unbelief she felt, which, said she, is as a wall. O that this wall of unbelief were removed, that I might have a clear evidence! O that the heart of stone were taken away! One night, about a week before she died, she called hastily to her son, telling him the Lord had *taken away the heart of stone*, and filled her mouth with praise. She continued in peace, though in much pain, till her spirit returned to God. The following night a man was buried, who had been a sufferer for some years, but in that time brought home to God.

February 14.—My mind is sorrowful. It seems as if the Lord was about to take my Sally from me. She grows worse and worse; her legs swell much, her strength fails, and all means used appear unsuccessful. I have been so supported, as I could not have expected; not with great joy, but a determined resignation—a clinging to the will of God, be the event what it may. She has been as the tenderest of daughters to me; a spiritual friend both to soul and body; a most useful housekeeper, and the best of nurses: in short, the staff of my old age. If I lose her, I shall be stripped of all that makes my life comfortable. We keep a kind of inn for the Lord's people; and I am so infirm I cannot supply her place in care and management. In the work of God she is also admirably useful, and together we get through a good deal. But left alone, what a poor creature shall I be to go through all these fatigues? But I will encourage myself in the Lord. We shall not be parted. She goes a little before, and I shall follow after.

March 9.—I have still a season of trial, but not without profit. My dear Sally is yet ill, apparently going into a consumption. I must now, as Abraham, lay the whole of my earthly comforts on the altar! But I cling to the will of God. Christ left all for me. O, my Lord, enable me to *glorify thee in the fire!* This morning, I was blessed in those words, "Casting all your care on him, for he careth for you."

March 19.—This was our quarter day. I found in the morning a particular faith in devoting myself to the Lord, that his whole will might be accomplished in me, and by me that day; and I saw the immediate guidance of his hand in each particular. I felt thankful that our application to Mr. Young had apparently been blessed, and my dear friend was better, and enabled to assist me through the hurry of the day. We went to bed in peace, though fatigued. But in the night she spit blood again. This circumstance seems to take away, humanly speaking, all hope of her recovery. The discharge continued, though lessening all the next day and night. Blessed be God, I felt power to go through all that I was called to in the Lord's work, and to cling fast to his will by resignation.

March 25.—Sally is very poorly. The bleeding continues, though the discharge is small. Yesterday morning, Easter Sunday, I felt power to throw myself on the Lord, and was helped through the duties of the day. I asked her how she felt her mind when she began to spit the blood? She replied, she felt no fear of death, but a firm confidence that the Lord would finish his work if he took her directly. At the same time she felt tenderly for me. She added, "On Thursday, being in great pain, I dropped into a doze, and thought I heard the voice of my dear master, saying, as if he stood by me, 'The sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.'" It was a refreshment to me to have, as it were, a message from heaven in this time of trouble. As I sat in my pew at church, I thought, I must now go to the table alone. Once I had my dear husband there, and my child at my side. Now, as Naomi, I must say, *I went out full, but return empty*. As I knelt at the table, it seemed as if her spirit was one with mine. On my return to the pew, as I was pleading in prayer that the Lord would order all, it came to me,—

"Leave to his sovereign sway
To choose and to command;
So shalt thou, wond'ring, own his way,
How wise, how good his hand."

I said, Lord, look upon us! It was answered, *The hairs of your head are all numbered*. I then said, My dear Saviour, our concerns are regarded in the court above; I freely leave them there! It came with power, *And the care of them is with the Most High*. That so melted my heart, I could not help bursting into tears. But they were tears of gratitude. The Lord did not seem to tell me what he would do with me; but *patience must have its perfect work*.

May 8.—Many mercies and many trials have I passed through since I wrote last. My dear Sally is yet very poorly, and I feel myself called to stand on my watch tower, that I may gain all the good designed me in this trial. I desire to be in the posture of Abraham when he was going to Mount Moriah. What will be the end I know not, but it has been a time of much pain.

May 30.—The Lord hath in great mercy heard prayer

in many respects of late. I know not where to begin to recount his goodness. My dear Sally is much better, and seems to gather strength beyond expectation. On Sunday night last I was led to make a fresh dedication of my all to God; and he showed me I was to confide alone in him. I fear much for my dear friend, but I am not called to hinder her in any thing, but commit all to the Lord, for I have given up all into his hand.

June 28.—Blessed be God, I do feel an increase of union, and a recollected posture of mind. Reading that line to-day in one of Mr. Wesley's letters, "Entire resignation implies entire love. Give him your will, and you give him your heart," I felt a spring of satisfaction arise in my mind. I am sure I do feel an increasing resignation, and that not in theory, but in practice. My most near and tender feelings have been touched of late. I live under those trials at this time, not only in the continued illness of my dear Sally, who still seems consumptive, but other circumstances besides. I can feelingly say, "The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation." There appears to be one design in all the Lord's dispensations toward us, viz., the bringing us to lose our wills perfectly in his adorable will; and I find nothing so helpful as to be quite still in his hand. Committing all to the Lord, however difficult things may appear, I am to stand still, and the Lord makes a way through in his own time, and often the trial is only a shadow. Like Abraham, we all are called to offer our Isaac, and then the cross is removed. We have had peculiar expenses of late, and my gracious Father hath provided for that. A few days since, I received a letter from my eldest brother's wife, in which she sent me a present of twenty pounds. Lord, didst thou not tell me, *I will bless them that bless thee*? Let this kindness be so returned, O Lord, in spiritual and temporal blessings!

July 20.—Lord, thou art good! I feel thine arm does support me. O teach me the "way of faith more perfectly!" My dear child grows worse. She coughs almost continually. I feel it as a knife in my heart. She is my earthly all; and in the whole universe there is but one thing I love more than her, that is, "the will of my God." To that I do, I must, I will refer every thing!

August 6.—Having been called to take a little journey of thirty miles, I have found it a good deal disorder my body, as, of late years, travelling always does : and with the continued illness of my dear friend, I have little time for writing, except the letters I have to answer. But, blessed be the Lord ! I have been carried through all my weekly meetings with a peculiar sense of the presence of God. Last Tuesday, in our intercession, we laid her case again before the Lord, with much freedom, and I think she has been better since. We are called to hang on Jesus, and cleave to his will. My dear child is kept in much peace, and she prays that the trial may answer all that the Lord intends before it is removed. Lord, I add my prayers to hers ; so let it be ! I shall certainly feel her loss severely. With her I can consult about every circumstance. To her I can tell every temptation ; and her watchful attention over each infirmity of my body is uncommon. Her skill in managing all the affairs of my family is very great ; she takes off all burdens from me, and leaves me wholly free. Her help in the work of God also is unspeakable. She assists me in memory, in speaking to the people, in judging concerning them, in reproofing and exhorting ; and I do nothing in the Church affairs but with her counsel. In her own meetings, a few of which she still will keep up, her word is clothed with power ; and many, very many, are weeping through fear of her loss. I feel the Lord requires me to keep looking to him alone, and living only the present hour, with a continual Abraham-like spirit, holding my sacrifice before the Lord, to whom my more than all is due.

August 14.—I have been renewing my covenant with the Lord this day—to abandon all my whole cause, both of soul and body, into his hand ! and to offer afresh to *follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*. Fourteen years of widowhood I have this day completed. And now it seems as if my last, my only remaining friend and comfort was called for ! And I have been pleading with the Lord that I may cling to his dear will. Yesterday morning I had a sweet refreshing gale from Sion's top, and such confidence I felt in the all-sufficiency of the Saviour, that I could lean all my weight of care on the Lord, and saw his arm was under both my friend and me. It lifted off

my care, and healed my suffering mind. This morning I have strove to humble myself before the Lord, and to inquire whether I may ask the healing of my child! It seemed as if I was led to stand still; for though no trial of the kind could be so near my heart, yet I feel my dearest concern is *the glory of God*. And therefore I can only say, *Thy will be done!* But if the cup may pass from me! Lord, let silence plead my cause! I will not ask any thing, but such a gracious conduct toward us, as will bring most glory to thee, and for which we shall most praise thee in eternity.

August 30.—This has been a day of searching into my heart. I see there is great need of the Lord to lay to his hand. I want a deliverance I do not yet feel. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of *illumination*. That I in a low degree feel. I have a light which increases in reading the Scriptures; and some fresh views of the amazing glory of redemption are given to me. Secondly, The Spirit of God is a spirit of “prayer, of groans unutterable.” A little of this I feel, but out of seven times a day in prayer, often I have not what I call *the spirit of prayer*, above three or four times. Thirdly, The Spirit of God is a spirit of *humiliation*. Surely I may say I have this mark; but I do not love humiliation, at least till I have had time to reflect. I do not run to embrace it,* nor pick it up as I would a jewel. Fourthly, The Spirit of God is a spirit of *sanctification*, purifying the heart. I do feel it is working that in me. Yet I am not free from reptile thoughts, those which crawl on the earth. They do not, it is true, carry the stamp of sin upon them, yet they hinder prayer. Fifthly, The Spirit of God is the spirit of *love*. What shall I say to this? My love to God does increase: I can say, O God! my chief joy!—but I can very seldom say, O God! my exceeding joy! My love seems faint and dim, and that to my neighbour keeps pace with it. I deny myself for their sake, but that is nothing. The pleasure I feel in helping the distressed,

* Is not this too strong? Ought we to run to meet that which must be sin to others? We must indeed be *conformed to the Son of God*; and we should bear his reproach, not only with patience, but with joy. In a mind so devoted as Mrs. Fletcher's, the meaning must be good, but there may be some danger to others in this strong way of expressing it.—Ed.

is greater than that which I deny myself in. Indeed, if I did not do so, I should know "the love of the Father was not in me." But I cannot rest till I feel a greater measure of that love which brought my Saviour from heaven to earth, to take on him the iniquity of us all. O Jesus, let that mind be in me that was in thee! I ask it in thy name!

September 12.—I am this day threescore. My dear husband would have been seventy. But he has had fourteen years in glory. Lord, prepare me for all prepared for me! O let me live my last days to thy glory as I have never done! Yesterday the Lord gave me that word, "When thou goest through the waters, they shall not overflow thee." I asked if I might pray for my dearest comfort to be spared. That text seemed an answer: "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, make your requests known unto God." For some days her cough has been more strong, and more frequent. I feel the will of God my sure defence. If he please, he can yet raise my dear friend; but if he have otherwise determined, *It is the Lord*. He cannot err: I will not choose.

October 7.—We have had the comfort to hear of the happy death of Miss Styche. She told me the conviction she got while at Mrs. Micklewright's school, abode with her for some time. But, said she, afterward when I got into the world, all you had said seemed wiped away. Then the Lord laid his hand on me by this illness. A blessed illness it has been to me, for it hath brought me to seek him. But now I fear he will never receive, nor forgive me. When we told her of the great atonement and perfect righteousness of the Saviour, she seemed as if she would swallow every word. She then said, When Mr. Walter visits me I often feel comforted; but I cannot retain it; and I feel my heart full of sin. At this time she was torn with evil tempers, unable to live, and afraid to die: suffering much, and having no comfort; so that nothing seemed to please or satisfy her. Yet she struggled hard to obtain not only consolation, but *the mind that was in Christ*. One day, as a few of us were at prayer with her, she received such a lift of faith as delivered her from all her bonds. From that hour all about her were

amazed at the change. She was all the lamb, and the dove! The new creature shone clear indeed. When my Sally was saying, Shortly you will come to the blessed moment, when, "ready winged for the flight," you shall see the chariot of Israel come for you, her eyes sparkled with delight, and she said, "I am so happy as I cannot express. Sometimes I have fiery darts; but I look to Jesus, and he turns them away. He is always with me." She continued thus to the last. A few hours before she died, she seemed to have much of the presence of God, repeating with great delight, "Ready winged, ready winged!" She then begged her young sister to turn to God, saying, "You must cleave to those who have done me so much good. You see how I am, and I would not be otherwise; I would not live for a thousand worlds. I have such a prospect—so clear into eternity. Jesus hath saved me! *He hath washed me from my sins in his own blood.* He hath put on me *the white robe*, and I see my way clear. O cleave to the people that have been so blessed to me." Soon after she said, "Molly, Molly, look! do not you see these sweet creatures?" Her sister replied, "No, I do not." To which Miss Styche said, "But I do, they are come for me." Molly asked, What are they like? She replied, "They are glorified spirits! they are virgins—they are come for me! Yes, they are come for me!" And immediately,

"She clap'd the glad wing, and tower'd away,
To mingle with the blaze of day!"

She died October the 4th, in her twenty-first year.

November 12.—Many solemn thoughts, yet such as have led to God, have occupied my mind to-day. When I look back eighteen years, it gives me pleasure to recollect that my dear love and I agreed that we would not limit our union by that word, "Till death us doth part," but that we would consider our covenant as eternal. Not that we meant to tie each other from a future marriage; but that our union of soul was never to be broken. Often when we have been speaking together of this, he would say, "Well, Polly, then our spiritual as well as our temporal mercies are mutual." From this recollection, I was led to consider that text, "*He hath made us meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light;*" and

felt a power to pray as I have often done, that I might be permitted to share in his joy, now inherited before the throne. At night, in the society, my faith was somewhat increased.

December 23.—I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. My dear child grows worse: well, I will cling to that rock, *Thy will be done!* This shall be my momentary employ the remainder of my life. Not one on earth to whom I can converse of the past trials through which she hath walked with me! Well, my Lord, thou knowest my solitary situation. The pain she suffers from that dreadful cough, and a complication of complaints, would constrain, I think, any beside herself to keep their bed. But while there is a grain of strength given to her, she will use it, both in the work of God, and in the care of our affairs. I will hang upon that word, "I will bring the blind by a way they know not: I will lead them in paths which they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do for them, and not forsake them."

January 20, 1800.—This morning as I was laying before the Lord the sufferings of my dear child, I thought, *If the hairs of our head are numbered*, then I am sure each time she has that cough, so hard, so violent, it is noticed by the Lord. I felt that it was; and asked, with submission, that it might be removed, or that he would graciously show that it was sent in love. After awhile, these words were sweetly impressed on my mind, "The light affliction which is but for a moment shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." I felt that word, *far more exceeding*, so that I answered, Well, my blessed Lord, I will hold to my old word, *God shall choose our inheritance for us*. Give me, O Lord, to find my all in thee! Last night, in the society, those words were impressed on my mind, *Seek first the kingdom of God, and all things else shall be added unto you*.

March 17.—Yesterday Mary Wyke entered glory, in the nineteenth year of her age. She is a remarkable answer to prayer. In the beginning of her illness she was very careless and hard; but after much suffering, she was brought to know herself, and to seek the Lord. He was pleased to manifest his love to her in some de-

gree, but still she had a great hankering after life; and at times she was much troubled with unholy tempers, which she sorely lamented. A few months ago, her body being brought to the state of a Lazarus, she was considering whether there was any likelihood of recovery, when those words were powerfully applied to her heart, "Thou shalt die and not live." This she told me she knew to be the voice of God; and felt all her will for life immediately taken away. From that day a mighty change appeared upon her. She has had much of the presence of the Lord, and been kept in a sweet, calm, loving state, ripening for glory—declaring she was willing to suffer as long as the Lord should please, for she knew her pains were working out a "farther weight of glory." Sometimes she was triumphantly happy; at other times, she could only lie and groan in agony; but even then she would say, if asked, "I am happy; and I have no will." A fortnight before her death she dreamed her grandmother, who died here in the Lord a few years ago, came to her, and a person whom she did not know came with her. That person said, "Mary, hold faith and patience a little longer, and you shall be with us." The night before she died she was very happy. Ten minutes before she departed, her mother said, Are you happy, my dear? She, with difficulty, answered, "Yes,"—and soon ceased breathing. Eternity is very near! O, for a swifter progress in our souls!

March 31.—This has been a day of recollection, and of groaning after a fuller manifestation of the Lord's power. It is a time for trial. My dear child, what does she suffer! Yet how patient and passive in the hand of God! I seem left to suffer; yet I am wonderfully supported too. Well, comfort is not that which I most desire. I feel my strongest desire is, that the nature of God may be more powerfully stamped on my soul.

May 21.—The Lord does not suffer my sorrowful attention to hinder his work. Last Sunday, I was at the Wood. Never, I think, did I feel more freedom. O my God! work for the glory of thy name on this people! I feel their souls very near to me. The Lord is with us in trouble, and my dear Sally is kept in a calm, quiet frame. Through all she suffers, she says, she has such a sense

how safe she is in the hand of God, that his time either for ease or death, is the best time.

August 1.—My dear friend is yet no better. Last night was a painful one. O that this trial may have its due effect on us both! I long for full conformity to all the will of God. I see every grace increases by use. I am called to exercise faith, and as faith gathers strength, I know every other grace will keep pace with it. I have had much temptation since I wrote last; but how can faith be in full exercise if we see all clearly?

September 24.—Lord, thine eyes are upon us! We see and feel thy help in the midst of our trials. I have little time to write, my dear child being now so very bad; but I am led to live on that word, "Thy will be done." It is a day of clouds, and at times of thick darkness. All my help seems to be in clinging to the will of God. One sentence that Miss Ritchie (now Mrs. Mortimer) read in sister Johnson's letter from Bristol was blessed to me. She says, "When we look at Jesus by faith, Satan loses his power, and, if I may so speak, his place, which is the reasoning faculty."*

January 1, 1801.—What have I seen and felt since last I wrote! On December 3d my dearest child and friend went triumphantly to glory! I was helped to write an account of her devoted life and happy death, and read it to the society while her precious corpse was in the house.

* An undue dependence on the reasoning faculty is indeed Satan's strong hold, and highest delusion. Any repulse to this temptation, he will suggest, must amount to a renunciation of that noble gift of God! It is thus "the strong one, armed" with the pride, self-will, prejudice, and worldly spirit of the sinner, (which he will call his *reason*,) "keepeth his house, and his goods are in peace." In this state our Lord found the fallen Jewish nation; and in this state Luther (not to mention other reformers) found the fallen Christian Church. Almost in this state (but with a pure doctrine in the established creeds, and liturgy) did Mr. Wesley find this favoured kingdom. In this state, also, does the "Spirit of Christ" find every natural man, however learned or wise. But who will sink under *that sentence of death* which the *Holy Spirit* pronounces, John xvi, 8-11, against all this *deceivableness of unrighteousness*? Only the man who submits to have faith placed on the throne usurped by the "reasoning faculty." Nor can any man know "the salvation that is through faith," but the man who resolutely maintains that Divine allegiance;—who steadily *walks by the same rule, and minds the same things*.—ED.

I have now scarce strength to look it over. How does the Lord help us in the needful hour! In the ordering of her funeral, and various things which fell on me alone, I have been brought through, and proved her dying words, "He will put his everlasting arms underneath you." He doth, and I am borne up. But O what a loss do I sustain! God only knows what she was to me, and himself alone can fill the aching void! What adds to the weight is, I have not that communion with God I long for. I am amazed at the resignation which I feel. Yes, I do, I will adore him, for taking away my all from me.* I fear I hung too much on her. I did nothing without her counsel, and truly I was dearer to her than herself. To the last she felt in the most tender manner for me, and often said, "If the Lord saw good, how gladly would I drink this bitter cup instead of you; and close your eyes instead of you closing mine! But the will of God is all to us; in that we are agreed; we live in 'Thy will be done.'" I do not *know* indeed *the heart of a stranger*; and I do trust the Lord is about to make me "his own habitation through the indwelling Spirit." Now and then, for a moment, I have such a display of God, as I know and feel would turn my gloomy night into a bright day. But it is but for a moment, and then seems to shut up again. I must remember my dear Sally's words, "We are both waiting for the Lord;" and "it is good to hope, and quietly to wait for the salvation of God." I begin this year as a hermit: ah! that I may end it as a saint. Come, Lord Jesus, and fulfil all thy gracious promises to my waiting soul!

I sometimes feel her as being present with me. We had all things in common here, and I trust I shall partake of her heavenly inheritance. Thinking of that one night when I was very sad, in a moment all the gloom went off, and such a sweetness came over my soul as seemed to wipe away all grief. I dropped asleep, and these words sounded in my ears all night:—

"They drink the deifying stream,
And pluck the ambrosial fruit."

March 11.—What cause I have to bless the Lord! How often have I feared, if I lost my dear friend I should not

* This was beyond the highest sensible consolation.—Ed.

be able to glorify God, that I should have no spirit to go through any thing. But it is not so. I never felt more light and liberty in speaking to the people than I do now; and though very trying circumstances have occurred in the work of God, as well as in my family affairs, yet I have been carried through all in a manner that amazes me. How faithful is the Lord!

June 5.—I continue to feel my loss severely; yet I also feel I love and adore the will of God. Yea, and I admire it. What wisdom and love do I see in all this cutting dispensation! I cleaved too much to that precious gift, which was lent to me in order to raise my soul to God. One night I dreamed I saw her standing before me. I cried out, O my dear love, are you come? I have waited for this. She expressed the tenderest regard, but without words, and it left a sweet sensation on my mind. Another time I dreamed* I was involved in great trials, and thought, O if my Sally had been now with me all would have been nothing. Immediately I saw her just by me! and she gave me to know she was nearer than I thought. I know our friends are not really divided from us; they are only become invisible. Perhaps if we saw the spirits of our dear companions at such seasons, we might be much tempted to put our trust in them. A veil is therefore drawn between; and all for our eternal good. But the Scripture declares, "We are come to the spirits of just men made perfect;" but this is far more plain to their eyes than to ours, which are as yet under the veil. Lord, give me to rely on thyself alone!

July 14.—I had this morning a comfortable season while meeting the class. Those words of Fenelon were much on my mind, "I will, with John, lean on his breast, and feed on love, by joining my heart to his." Sometimes, while speaking on faith, such a sweetness overspreads my soul, as if I had run into the bosom of my Lord. I see, at those times, such an all-sufficiency in the Saviour, and

* In this way of Divine direction and encouragement the Lord acts as a Sovereign, and gives as he sees good. To this the holy Scripture bears full testimony. Mrs. Fletcher was often thus favoured. But how mercifully was she preserved from placing any undue dependence on these favours! The word of God was the guide to which she referred every thing, and by which she "tried the spirits whether they were of God."—Ed.

such a vastness in that thought, "We have boldness and access through him;" and again, "He hath borne all our sins in his own body on the tree," that it seemed I had only to run to the Saviour every moment, as a child to its fond parent! Lord, open the way of faith more and more to my waiting soul!

August 15.—Yesterday was a solemn day to me. Sixteen years are passed since my eyes beheld the awful scene of my dear husband's entrance into glory. O what have I passed through since that time! Could I then have known that my precious friend would have been taken also, how it would have aggravated the bitter cup! But blessed be God that all the future is hid in his will. There I find a solid rest. It is now a little more than seven months since I lost her, and I have been, and am, enabled to say, *Jesus hath done all things well!* I feel my soul more on the stretch after God, and my old promises seem to revive afresh, as if drawing near to the time of accomplishment. That promise in particular, *Thou shalt walk with me in white.*

August 20.—I awoke this morning with strong desire and prayer that every thought might this day be the Lord's. O why is there any distance! Come, my beloved, and take the full possession of every power! My soul is grieved that I have not more ardour in speaking for God; though, blessed be his name, I have found him graciously with me at times in the meetings. But I do not catch every occasion, as my dear Sally did. The other day a man came to sell something we wanted. Being engaged in writing, I sent one of the family to take it for me. After he was gone she told me the man had said he had two children sick of the smallpox, and had never had it himself. I asked, earnestly, And did you not talk to him about his soul? She answered, No. O what did I feel! Had I gone down myself how much better should I have been employed!

Lord's day, August 23.—In the meeting this morning I found the Lord present; and I had also a little opportunity of helping his people. O what a favour! I, who once expected to be left without the necessities of life for myself, have now such frequent opportunities of helping the poor! Lord, thou art good to me beyond expression!

This evening I spent two hours in retirement, and I found it the best of all the day. God gave me a praying spirit. But it was also a time of deep humiliation. Such a crowd of words and acts, foolish and sinful, which were spoken or committed forty or fifty years ago, pressed into my mind like so many barbed arrows. I see in myself, from a child, a depth of the fall, beyond, I think, any other. But this evening, though I felt deeply sorrowful, and ready to lie down under the feet of all, I found it mixed with encouraging hope. These words bore much on my mind :

“ I shall soon obtain the grace,
Pure in heart to see thy face.”

August 28.—This morning I awoke, after a restless night, with a strong desire to live to God. In prayer I found some encouragement. In visiting some sick also I felt the presence of God. J. B. seemed to be very comfortable under his affliction, and much led to look to Jesus through all ; for, said he, “ What a delight it is to rejoice in God, though in anguish and pain ! Why it is all from him ! that is my comfort.” I see, more and more, souls grow best in the furnace. It is our proper soil while here ; to enjoy is by and by.

October 17.—Lord, perform thy word, on which thou hast made me to trust ! That saying of our Lord, in Mark xi, concerning the fig tree, was much laid on my heart : “ If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall say to this mountain, Depart ! ” and “ Whatsoever things ye ask in prayer, believe that ye receive, and ye shall have them.” That is, believe that it becomes yours as sure as ye ask ; yea, at that time the grace ye ask for is, as it were, held out to you ; and you may say, I have asked a clean heart, a stayed mind, a baptism of the Spirit. Well, they are mine ; I shall enjoy them. They are given as an estate left to me : but I now want to enter into the possession. My Jesus is preparing my heart for his own abode. He will enter, and with him all his fulness, to fill up every aching void.

August 14, 1802.—I have not written much the beginning of this year, except what concerned the death of dear Mrs. Yate. She has long walked in the ways of God, and often enjoyed sweet and close communion with him.

When very young she received a letter which treated ~~on~~ the different states of the inward and outward court worshippers.* She threw the letter on the table, and clasping her hands together, she fell on her knees, and cried to the Lord with a strong and vehement cry, that she might become one of those who should *worship him in spirit and in truth*. Her prayer was answered, and she became truly devoted to a crucified Saviour. The souls of her children lay very near her heart, and she spared no pains to bring them to the knowledge of God. In the cause of God she was deeply engaged, and to the utmost of her strength visiting the sick, and inviting sinners to the Lord. She was led in the way of the cross, and being weak in body, she was much exposed to temptation. In her last illness she was frequently buffeted by the enemy of her soul; at other times she was much comforted. Her most painful temptation was, that the Lord would forsake her in the last conflict. After enduring this for some time, she told me of some promises which had been applied to her mind; above all that word, "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Yet these glooms, as she called them, appeared dreadful to her. While we were conversing the spirit of faith came over us both, the light dispelled all darkness, and in speaking and prayer there was a power quite uncommon. She said, "I think you never had such a time in this house before;" and indeed it was true. From that hour she expressed herself as quite in peace, ever after saying, "I have nothing to trouble me now." One day she said, "When I look on my limbs worn to a skeleton, it is with pleasure; for I know I shall go to God." At another time she observed, "These words are much with me, 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.' I leave myself in *His* hand, and all is peace."

On the 21st of January, I was conversing with her, and exhorting her to live the present moment as if she was sure to die the next. A clear light seemed to shine powerfully on my mind as I was speaking; she entered into it and was refreshed. As soon as I was gone, that word was strongly impressed on her heart, *This is the*

way, walk ye in it. On the 27th she observed how comfortably she had walked ever since—that life or death were now quite equal; and that she wanted nothing but the will of God to be done. “I am,” said she, “quite happy, and that word, *our Father*, is so opened to me as fills me with delight. I have nothing to hold me here. No, I am ready to give up all. My children are near and dear to me, but I am ready to leave them at his call.” She had close trials, such as caused the most tender feelings. She observed, “I cannot distrust the Lord, for he supports me through every thing. This morning, as I was in prayer, a wonderful sweetness came over my soul, and my will was so lost in the will of God as I never found it before. I saw myself perfectly safe in his hand, and I cannot ask either for myself or my children any thing but his will. My dependence on the Lord is entire. I would not have a choice of my own for all the world. He orders every thing for me, small and great. No, I want nothing for soul or body but by his order. He is continually telling me, *In blessing I will bless thee*. O, how sweet is that word, ‘There is no complaining in our streets!’ No, no, I cannot complain, I have no cause. All around me is blessing, and the best of all is, my heart is full of *love*. *O love, love!* Let there be nothing but love in my soul.”

After a little while, she said, “I want to feel the change more forcibly, I want to realize heaven; I do not seem to *see* glory!” I replied, Jesus was perfectly holy, yet *his soul was sorrowful unto death*. Holiness is not to be measured by perfect joy, but by perfect resignation. You can see Jesus, and feel no will but his. She replied, “O yes, yes, I can see him, he is ever with me, I have no will but what is lost in God: and I am waiting the accomplishment of many glorious promises which have been given me.”

March 7,—She told me her cough had been very bad, and almost constant; but, said she, “With every fit of coughing, the Lord gave me some comfortable word. That word came with great power, *Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father*.” She added, “I have had a night of suffering and of comfort; all my sins were brought before me, even from my infancy, and I saw in myself such a depth of the fall as I cannot put into words; but

I need not fear, since Jesus saves me. *He forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin*, and I felt it was so. Afterward that word was applied, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love him;' and O, how I felt it was prepared for *me*! Yes, he hath prepared a place for *me*, and I shall be with him. In the afternoon I was thinking of my husband and children, in particular the two little ones, when I had such a discovery of the tender love and guardian care of the Lord as took away every anxious thought. O, he is all in all true, I would not take them out of his hand for the world. How is it, when I lie awake for hours, and cannot sleep, nor hardly move, I can lie so comfortably! I feel such a rest in God as sweetens all." She desired me to return thanks to all her dear friends who had shown such sympathy through all her sufferings. Thus, like a truly patient lamb, she lay before the Lord from day to day, longing for the happy hour of admittance into glory. As her outward strength decayed, her love, patience, and entire resignation, visibly increased.

April 12.—She could scarcely speak, her throat being much affected as well as her lungs. She looked on me, and said, "I am very ill, but happy in my soul. I have had a sweet night. I have no fear, no doubt; I am waiting for the Lord." Soon after, she began to change for death. She asked to be lifted up, in order to tell more of the goodness of God, but could not form the words she wanted to speak. She at length said, "I have strong confidence,"—and soon after, without a struggle, she entered into the joy of her Lord.

I praise the Lord for the measure of health I enjoy, which, when I do not go beyond my strength, is quite comfortable. And now, my Saviour, shine upon my soul, and tell me how it is with that? I think I feel my dependence more singly on Jesus, more weaned from earth, and more athirst for the whole mind of Christ. Indeed, there are moments when all is clear; but I want not to have a thought but such as is approved by a smile of Jesus, and to have a witness constant and clear that nothing but love dwells in my soul. I know I do taste of pure love, but I do not abide in Jesus; therefore I

do not *bring forth much fruit*. There is an entering into rest which I have of late been particularly led to ask for; sometimes it seems near, and I am waiting for it in a clearer manner than usual. Some observations which I read the other day, were much blessed to me. Speaking to a mourning soul, the author says, "Make God, as he is in himself, the object of thy joy, without any consideration of thyself at all.* Let your soul exult in that thought, *The Lord is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation*. Observe, the Lord is then strong *for* and *in* you, when you look to him alone, unmixed with any thing else. But, on the other hand, when the eye of the soul is double, looking partly for a fitness *in itself*, the light is put out, as it is said of our Lord, *He could not do many mighty works because of their unbelief*. This *looking unto Jesus* is both an emptying and a filling grace. It empties the soul of self and the creature, and fills it with God. It is a transforming view; the more we see of him, the more we shall be like him. Does he not tell thee, *This is the victory whereby we overcome, even our faith?* Wouldst thou have the victory first, and believe afterward! 'But I am conscious of idols!' Then plead the promise, *From all thine idols I will cleanse thee*. This is *reaching out to the things before*. 'But I fear I am not willing to part with them.' Perhaps not; but if thou wilt look to Jesus, and wait at his feet, and tell him of thy helplessness, he will so shine out on thy soul that the love of all other things shall drop off. What becomes of the stars when the sun shines? Do they not disappear before the greater light? So shall every other love before that mighty love he will pour into thee. But remember thou art to *hold fast thy confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; for ye have need of patience, that when ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promise*. Now this single eye, this constant act of faith, *glorifying in hope to the end, is doing the will of God, and thus you shall receive the promise.*"

November 13.—Yesterday concluded twenty-one years since I joined in an eternal covenant with my dear Mr. Fletcher. O, what advantages I have had through my

* See the note on page 220.

union with some of the most excellent of the earth ! But, alas ! how little have I profited to what I might have done ! I have this morning been crying to the Lord to stir me up to more faithfulness. I am now in my sixty-fourth year—almost at the end of my race, and the great work of an entire conformity to God is yet to be gained. I found freedom in prayer, so that an hour on my knees seemed to pass as quick as a quarter usually does, and I hope and believe I shall from this day keep up the intense desire.

Sunday, November 22.—Through illness, I have been out but once this day. It is long since I have been forced to miss a meeting ; but I find all right my Master orders. It has been a good Sabbath to my soul. I was truly humbled to hear how the dear people wept and prayed for me ! O, my God, let that word be perfectly fulfilled, “Then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.” As I was reading chap. xxxi of Genesis, that word struck me, *I am the God of Bethel !* Twenty years had elapsed, yet saith God, I am he that gave thee those sweet promises in that place. I am the same for ever ! While meditating on this, it seemed as if he said to me, I am the God who told thee, *Thou shalt walk with me in white.* Ah ! my Lord, I hang on thee with a firm belief. Thy words are *tried words, purer than silver.* The Lord will keep his promise for ever.

December 23.—I was much struck this morning in reading at the time of family prayer, the account of *Jacob wrestling with the angel.* I felt it kindle in me a degree of ardour which I did not feel before, to say with him, *I will not let thee go unless thou bless me*—yea, with the full communion of thy love.

February 18.—I have been confined near a month, and only able to speak in a low whisper. The disease is supposed to be a dropsy in the chest. I am sometimes in the night in danger of being suffocated. The night before last, I was very bad : and as I lay waiting in peace before the Lord, that word was applied with unusual power, “Call upon me in the day of trouble—I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” Ah ! my Lord, I do call on thee for more grace, but I cannot ask life or death ; I love the dear people, and feel a pain in leaving them ; yet I can only commit all to my adorable, unerring Head.

April 5.—Last night I laboured much for breath, and could not lie down. I saw myself encompassed with mercy and love. As I was reflecting on the uncertainty of the issue of my complaint, the thought struck me, my Lord was at this season sold into the hands of men, who strove to join with devils to afflict him; and if kind physicians should mistake, and make me suffer, I may be said to be given into the hands of men, but not without the Lord. These words were sweet:

“I fain with these would sympathize,
And share the sufferings of my Lord!”

As I was reflecting that I had nothing to plead only

‘Jesus my salvation is,
— This shall stand, and only this,’—

a dart came across my mind,—What if Calvinism be true? Then you may be one he hates! Immediately that word came, “He hateth nothing that he hath made, his mercy is over all his works.” Well, my Lord, this I plead, *I am thine, save me!* Give me to glorify thee, *through the fire and through water.* The tenderness of Miss Tooth, whom the Lord hath sent to me, is very great.

April 11.—The Lord hath permitted me to be sorely exercised through the want of breath. The night before last I was forced to sit up in bed till four o’clock. Last night, blessed be God, the fit lasted but one hour, and then I rested comfortably. My one act is that of clinging to the will of God.

June 2.—Blessed be the Lord, he hath fulfilled his word. He bids me “call upon him in the day of trouble;” and in my deliverance I do glorify him, and acknowledge his dear and powerful hand. I have been for some time restored to my comfortable meetings, and preserved in tolerable health, with power to lie down in peace, and take quiet rest. O that this late dispensation may rouse my soul more abundantly to labour after a more perfect rest! *Lord, establish me with thy free spirit!* This morning one called who gave me the following extraordinary account: “On Saturday I had that word applied, ‘As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, abide ye in my love.’ But on Sunday night, while you were speaking on, *How we ought to venture on Christ*, my soul was greatly lifted

up, my faith began to rekindle, and I felt extraordinary power all the way home. At family prayer my soul was sweetly drawn out. Just as we were going to bed, I opened my Testament on those words, 'Ask what ye will, and I will do it for you.' I felt the power, and thought, I will not go to bed; I will stay and wrestle with the Lord. I did so; and O, what did I feel! I have often had glorious times, but never such a time as that. Those precious words were applied, 'You are sealed to the day of redemption.' Since then, as I was hearing a sermon on the New Jerusalem, I had such a glorious sight as I cannot describe! I cannot tell it to you." I asked, Was it a sight of the place, or of the Saviour? He answered, "It was both. I had four distinct sights; I saw the glory of the Father, the glory of the Redeemer, and then the Redeemer in his manhood, as covered with wounds: and also the Holy Spirit in his glory, ready to seal every soul who would take shelter in those wounds! I now feel my soul all on the watch. I seem as if I feared to speak or move, lest I should in anywise grieve that Holy Spirit."

My soul was much comforted at hearing this. Ah! Lord, hast thou begun? Then thou wilt go on. I do now believe an outpouring of thy Spirit will soon be given, and "times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." This man had a taste of pure love some months ago, but lost it through unprofitable reasonings. Ever since his first awakening, he has been a pattern to others, and I believe, never lost his *first love*.*

July 4.—When I awoke, I found those words applied, "Pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks." This morning, reflecting on them while in prayer, the whole passage seemed to be applied to my heart, "Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." The last words made a deep impression, "concerning you;" and I take it as a message from heaven. Lord, give me power to fulfil this sweet direction!

July 18.—A few nights since those words seemed continually with me,

* It is with great propriety Mrs. Fletcher bears this testimony concerning the spirit and conduct of a person who was favoured with such manifestations.—Ed.

"In all my ways his hand I own,
His ruling providence I see."

The next day a change took place in my house, and several circumstances occurred in Church affairs. O what a comfort was all that sentence to me! Yes, my Lord, I do see thou dost order all things, and on thee I rest.

August 19.—This last week has been very solemn. Eighteen years my dear husband has been in glory. O, how has each day brought its remembrance! O carry on thy work in my soul with more power! I cannot have much longer to remain here. I see and feel thy gracious hand extended over me for good, and I long for a full conformity to my Lord.

November 12.—This day twenty-two years, at this very hour, I was in Batley church, solemnly engaging to be one soul, one body, one interest, with my beloved husband for ever! But what have I seen in these twenty-two years? What deep waters have I passed through? I have been brought through, and mercy hath followed me to this hour. On this day I devote myself afresh to God. Let our wedding day be a fresh consecration unto Him who is the centre of our union! A little before my dear love's last illness, he indulged a train of thoughts on what I should do, and how I should live without him. He spoke tenderly of my marrying again; but finding I could not bear the thought, he said no more. Since his death, the light hath always shone quite clear on my soul, that I was not called to join in marriage with any man on earth, but to preserve the privileges of a single life which are so graciously bestowed upon me. Satan has spared no pains to trouble me in this way; but, blessed be the Lord, my light in this hath never been darkened one moment. I am the Lord's, and he hath opened my way before me, and still makes my cup run over with loving kindness and mercy. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

November 14.—In meeting the people on Sunday morning, I was struck with that thought, "The mind is to the soul what the mouth is to the body." I must take in food or lose my strength; but if I take poison I must die. Nay, if I avoid poison, but yet feed on wood and chaff, I shall as surely die. So the mind is the mouth of the soul

and though I should start at any thought apparently sinful, yet if I starve it, instead of continually endeavouring to draw *the sincere milk of the word*, I still sow to corruption, and *what I sow, that shall I reap*. Then let me fix my eye on the *great mystery of God made man*! Why did God become man? It was man by whom the covenant was broken, and therefore man must have suitable punishment laid upon him. It was God with whom it was broken, and therefore God must have suitable satisfaction made unto him. And as to that satisfaction, it was man that had offended, therefore it was man alone that could make it suitable. It was God that was offended, and therefore it was God alone that could make it sufficient. Now, being man as well as God, it behooved him *to fulfil all righteousness*, to keep the whole law in the perfect manner required by the Adamic dispensation: yet, as being God coequal with the Father, it was not from duty, but merely upon our account, that he thus subjected himself to the yoke of his own laws, himself, as God, being the Lawgiver, and so no more under it than the Father himself. Whatever, therefore, Christ did or suffered in the flesh, was meritorious, and the believer has accepted it. Mr. Wesley observes, in his note in the sermon on *The Lord our Righteousness*, This obedience of Christ, as it was infinite, pure, and perfect, did, without doubt, infinitely transcend all the obedience of all the sons of men, even if they had remained in their primitive state; for their obedience would still have been but the obedience of finite creatures, whereas the obedience of Christ was the obedience of one who was truly God as well as man, by which the laws of God had a Divine obedience performed to them. They could *command* no more than the obedience of finite creatures; whereas the obedience of Christ was the obedience of one who was the infinite Creator, as well as a finite creature; and by this he hath purchased for us a far greater salvation than if man had not fallen. As our *Head*, he hath also entered, yea, as our *Forerunner*, into that glorious union with the Deity which we could never have known but by the *Word being made flesh*, and performing this righteousness in our behalf. Now this transcendent glory, called *the joy of the Lord*, we are called to enter into—to be heirs of God, and

joint heirs with Christ. As himself hath said, *The glory which thou hast given me I have given them.*

December 3.—This day three years my dear Sally entered glory. O that I may be permitted to share with her *the inheritance of the saints in light!* I think I do enjoy it in a measure, for it is amazing to me how calm and comfortable my mind is kept, and how the Lord doth provide help for me in every circumstance. I have nothing to do but prepare for death. O for a constant look upward!

March 3, 1801.—I have a deep conviction on my mind to-day of that truth, The heart of man always seeks rest in something; therefore thoughts that *please*, and that have not the appearance of evil in themselves, yet if they are unnecessary, may lead to a seeking rest out of God. Here I have found Satan very busy, and am often forced to cry out, “I will know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” My heart is much in expectation of a closer union with my God than I have ever known. I wait for the Lord.

April 26.—Glory be to God. I find him near; he seems to be *sitting on my soul as a refiner’s fire*, and so calling every thought into judgment as I never found before. We have had very sweet times of worship lately. The Lord is indeed carrying on his work, blessed be his name; and I trust this meeting of the children will be for good. In this, Miss Tooth is made of great use to me. O, my tender Father! Thou dost not suffer me to want any thing.

June 17.—Help me, O my Saviour! It seems as if I could not get those answers to prayer which I want. Yet he gives me little touches,—some tokens for good, before I rise from my knees. But O, it is not what I long for. Such a sight I have of late into that word, *Let that mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus!* O how much is contained therein! Yet I see it is my privilege, for so I see the privilege held out by St. John, “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.” I find many have been blessed in our meetings lately; but I did not hear of it till several days after the time. And hence it has been a season of temptation and discourage-

ment with me. I thought what I had said was so short of what ought to have been spoken, that all the next week I felt a deep conviction, that unless the Lord put words into my mouth, and gave power with them, no good would be done. I even feared that the Lord did not approve of my calling the people together, when there was no one but me to speak to them. Yet I knew well that *all the good done upon the earth is the Lord's doing*, and that he can work by the meanest instrument. However, this was the conclusion, I must ask and wrestle for every meeting; public and private, and hang by faith on Christ alone, believing that word, "It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." On last Monday night I felt the answer. Then I had great freedom, and I cannot tell how many have since praised God for the blessing brought into their souls that night. I can do nothing without much prayer.

July 10.—We have had an awful affair at a pit hard by. Three young men were killed outright. The following Sunday they were buried, and it was computed that more than a thousand persons attended their funeral, Mr. Walter took the opportunity to speak to them, I trust not without effect. As some had been burned in that pit not long before, the master ordered the tools, &c., to be brought up, declaring he would have no more coal got there, at least for a time. Accordingly a man, one of our exhorters, who was an overseer of the work, went down with his eldest son, a fine youth about sixteen, and some other men. Just as the overseer got in, the vapour caught fire again, killed his son, and a boy who was with him, and most dreadfully burned himself and another man. Here was a trial indeed! Both himself and his wife much delighted in that son, who was carried home dead, and himself not likely to live an hour. His wife, who had a child at her breast, fainted away, and for some time it was not known which would die first. But the Lord supported them both by his almighty power; and the man was so filled with the love of God, in his greatest extremity of pain, that he has been a wonder to all. He declared that the Lord did *so make his bed in his sickness* that he could feel no will but that of God; and in that will he did glory! The other person who was burned was a young man that

had a few years ago some desires after true religion, but of late he had wholly fallen back. Between the two there was a striking contrast. The young man was all terror, and shrieked dreadfully. He had no comfort in pain, and no pleasant prospect if it should end in death. O, what need have we to use the present hour! Lord, give us unceasing prayer! O, let us live in the constant view of eternity! It is hoped both the men will recover.

August 27.—Glory be to God! I daily prove he is faithfulness and love. A few mornings ago I awoke with that word, "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." I did not take particular notice of it then; but yesterday, through an uncommon providence, I was called to go through such fatigue as to me seemed impossible. Yet I was carried through all with such ease, both as to body and mind, as amazed me. O, let me learn by all to live without fear, for I have in thee, O Lord, such a treasure-house as will always supply my every want. There is no room for fear or care. No, "the government is on thy shoulder." All the weight lies there, and my business is to sing and praise all the way through.

November 9.—Many mercies am I surrounded with; and though I have many infirmities of body, yet they are so held as with a bridle that I do not suffer much, and am able to attend all my appointments. I see all right; to be sure there are circumstances which would once have been a cross, but I am fully convinced all comes through my Saviour's hand, and therefore I know all shall work for good. I see my situation well suited for growing in grace, and I do grow; but O, that it were faster! I remember a time when I rather shrunk at repeating that line of the hymn,—

"Give me to feel an idle thought,
As actual wickedness;"

but truly I do now feel it so. I see the need there is of being all eye, not only against what appears evil, but also what is called innocent, but is really useless. Last week I received a letter from Leeds, informing me of the death of sister Crosby. I had a few days before received one from her own hand, a very precious one; and observed on it how her eyes and strength held out, though ten years older than I.

Her call was sudden—but one day's illness ; during which she was kept in faith and love, and departed (as it appeared) in her sleep in the evening. A mother in Israel hast thou been, and thy works shall praise thee in the gates.

November 12.—This day is particularly solemn to me. It is just twenty-three years this morning, both by the year and by the day, since I was at this very hour going to Batley church, to give my hand to my dearly beloved Mr. Fletcher. O, what fears did I feel, lest it should be a step out of God's way ! The light I had before seemed that morning to be quite obscure ; but as soon as it was over, the light broke out on my soul, and it hath shone clearer and clearer ever since. Blessed be God that I ever took that step ! It was the Lord that brought us together, and joined us in an eternal union ! Nor do I find that union any less ; nay, it is at this moment far greater than on that day. O, that I were more spiritual ! then I should partake more fully of the inheritance which he enjoys in the kingdom of our Father.

PART THE EIGHTH.

HER DECLINING YEARS.

January 1, 1805.

AND now another year is gone ! Lord, what shall I say ? Have I got nearer to thee ? In some things I have ; but ah ! Lord, show forth thy mighty power, and lift me above all ! Make "my feet as hinds' feet," that I "may tread on the high places," and never let in a thought that doth not lead to thee ! In the last month, on the seventh day, my dear, my only sister, was called to her eternal rest. We had not seen each other for some years, but constantly wrote all our minds and every concern to each other. Providence had thrown us, as to habitation, far asunder. In her last hours she expressed faith and resignation, and that she was waiting for the coming of the

Lord, and repeatedly begged me to give her up. I cannot but rejoice in her escape from suffering to eternal bliss, though the remembrance of our early pilgrimage is ever present to my mind. Her kind concern for me she has shown by leaving me fifty pounds a year for life. Some time since it seemed probable I should lose thirty pounds a year, and in that case I must draw back the help I give to some particular persons and affairs; and now the Lord hath taken care for that also. O, how faithful is my God! Eternity seems very near; my breath grows shorter, and my strength begins to fail. Well, the will of God is all; and it is all my desire that it may be perfectly done in me.

February 23.—I have had views of my past life lately, which seem to have discovered a depth of the fall of which I was not conscious. These openings endear the Saviour abundantly. O, how little did I know myself, when the Lord, who knew me thoroughly, was heaping blessings upon me, and inviting me to his bosom! Some years since, a person with whom I was intimate, and who meant well, was certainly very imprudent. Some of the blame fell on me, though I was quite clear. But I feared the reproach, and in order to justify myself, I told many of the particulars which were not necessary, and thus I rather aggravated the circumstances. I was afterward much pained. The other night as I lay in bed, it all came before me. I was nearly crushed—until those words gave me some relief, "They to whom much is forgiven love much." O, my gracious Lord, let this be fulfilled in me!*

This morning in prayer, and afterward in reading the second and third chapter of the Colossians, I felt much encouragement. This day I could not but observe that a power had rested on my mind ever since Sunday, which had kept off the enemy when he would approach; and if a thought would strive to creep in, I felt as if my faithful Lord gave me instantly a check, and excited me to beware. All these days I have seen such various mercies as I cannot express. Truly I can say,—

* How afflicting to a pure conscience does any transgression of the law of love appear, even after it has been forgiven, and the corrupt principle removed from the soul.—Ed.

"In all my ways his hand I own,
His ruling providence I see."

I was greatly struck last night by hearing of a young woman who was to have been married next Monday. One of her ungodly companions on the pit bank, asked her where she intended to keep her wedding? She profanely answered, "In hell." Soon after, being at her work near the mouth of the pit, her foot slipped, she fell in, and was dashed to pieces! This and some other things which have lately occurred of the same kind, seem to have brought eternity very near. O, how important is every moment!

October 12.—Come, Lord Jesus, and give me the complete victory! Last Sunday was a time of power to many, as they have since told me. This day I have been pleading with the Lord to take me altogether into his hand. O, what a struggle it is to keep faithful in rejecting useless thoughts! O, how hard never to *offend with the tongue!*

December 13.—Glory be to God for many mercies since I wrote last. Some peculiar answers to prayer I must relate. *The rich hardly enter into the kingdom*, and therefore we the more abundantly praise him in behalf of Mrs. B. and Mrs. E. Mrs. B. was, by nature, remarkable for a worldly spirit, a lionlike temper, and being hard to please. She had also used the means of grace for several years, without bearing fruit. About two years ago her health began to decline; and soon after, conviction began to fasten on her soul, though her complaint did not appear dangerous. Her cry was, for the comforts of religion, and she wondered why she could not feel them as others did. I clearly saw she was still unawakened, though somewhat enlightened. We prayed for her, and with her; and in a few months she began to feel she was a sinner. Her disorder also grew extremely painful; but her cry now was, "O, I hope the Lord will not take away my pain till he sees I shall not grow hardened again. O, what a Gospel-hardened sinner have I been! I have sat under the strongest truths; and all the time the world had my heart. Sometimes I did feel too; but as soon as I came home, all was gone. Yes, I had rather have my pain, bad as it is, than be Gospel-hardened again." She con-

tinued mourning a long time, often saying, I can get no answer—no, not the least answer—yet I hope too. Those words of the hymn are often on my mind,—

“I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.”

We now began to discern a great change. The lion was lost in the dove and the lamb. She continued to increase, by degrees, in her confidence. Sometimes she found such a hold of the Saviour, and such overflowing love, as if she could never fear more. Then conflicts would return, but her faith grew more firm, till, at length, her peace was unshaken. For a long time, either Miss Tooth, or myself, have seen her continually, and witnessed the mighty change which was wrought on her. One only darling child, a nice house just built, and many other ties she had to hold her here; but all was but as a grain in the balance in her account. She had truly *sold all for the pearl of great price*, and in the possession of that she was content, and proved to the last moment that she was *a new creature*.

The other I shall give in Miss Tooth's own words. “October the 3d, Mrs. M. acquainted me with the illness of Mrs. E., expressing a wish that I would see her, as it was too far for Mrs. Fletcher. I went the next morning, and found her very weak, but desirous of help for her soul. She told me she had for some time been convinced there was no happiness but in religion. I endeavoured to point her to the source of all consolation, the atoning Lamb of God, who is ever ready to receive conscious sinners. When I had prayed, and was leaving her, she expressed herself in a most grateful manner, thanking me for my kindness in coming to see her, and begged to be remembered to Mrs. Fletcher, adding, ‘How happy are the people who receive instruction from her.’ She had attended Mrs. M—’s school, and therefore was accustomed to Mrs. Fletcher’s meetings. The next time I saw her I read Mrs. Fletcher’s two letters to Miss Ireland, who died of the same complaint—a consumption. She seemed much affected the whole time we were together. After prayer I entreated her not to rest satisfied with any comfort she might feel, but to be earnest with the Lord for a clear

manifestation of his love to her soul. The next time I went, Mr. E. being at home, I could not see her, he being quite averse to it. However, I went again, and now all my fears were done away. O what a change had taken place! *The new song was indeed put into her mouth, even of praise and thanksgiving unto our God.* As soon as I came to her bedside she reached out her hand, saying, 'I am glad to see you.' I answered, So am I, my dear, to see you; and I trust you have had some gracious visits from the Lord since we met last. She answered, 'O yes, many, many.' Then looking earnestly at me, she said, 'That is a sweet word, *Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son that he receiveth!* And you know St. Paul saith, *These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*' Then, with her arms thrown up as in a rapture of delight, she repeated, '*A far more exceeding, a far more exceeding!* O it is not possible to tell you what I feel in those words.' I said, My dear, you have now a sweet foretaste of that enjoyment you will shortly have in full possession. 'O yes,' replied she, 'that is the thing, that is the thing! I am now so sure I shall be happy! Yes, die when I will, I am sure I shall be eternally happy! But it is no merit of mine; no, it is nothing I have done. No, no, it is *Jesus Christ hath died for me!* that is the comfort. O Miss Tooth, that is the comfort, Jesus Christ hath died for me!' Yes, I replied, that will never fail you. The Lord has been very gracious to you; and when I get home and tell dear Mrs. Fletcher, how will she praise the Lord for this! She then cried out, 'O beg her to pray for me. As long as I am here I hope she will not forget me. I have had those words very much on my mind, *Be ye also ready, for at an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.*' With great solemnity she repeated, '*at an hour ye think not.*' I said, You can now praise the Lord that he did not call you at an hour when you thought not of him. 'O yes,' said she, 'I praise him for it. I praise him also every hour for this affliction this light affliction.' She again expressed much love to Mrs. Fletcher, and said, 'I shall see her in glory. She parted from me in words of heavenly love, and triumphant joy. Soon after she desired one present to read the burial

service, to which she listened with great attention; but when they came to those words, *Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*, she was transported, and shouted aloud the high praises of her Saviour, who had given her the victory. 'I have it, I feel it!' she cried out; and in the same heavenly triumph she departed, and entered her heavenly Father's house."

January 23, 1806.—Blessed be the Lord, I feel an encouraging hope that this will be the best year of my life. I am waiting for my Lord to come and make my heart his loved abode, the temple of indwelling God. O how sweet is the communion of saints, when we meet with those who are all alive, or who are thirsting so to be! but, alas! how rarely are they found! Last Tuesday we had brother H. to preach here. I found him a man of God indeed; both his sermon and his prayers had much unction. We had some comfortable conversation after supper. His words tended to raise faith and love in our souls. Among other profitable particulars he mentioned one manifestation; it was as follows:—In his sleep he thought he was going to die, and pleaded that the Lord would give him the meetness for glory. After a time it was spoken to his heart, "It is done, it is done;" and he felt it was so, and found himself filled with the heavenly mind. Then he saw angels all round his bed; one in particular of great beauty at the foot. He thought himself dying, and lay with great delight waiting the event. It then appeared to him he drew his last breath, on which the beautiful angel at the foot of the bed clasped him in his arms, and conveyed him to the heavenly gates, which, as he stood before them, appeared very glorious. The angel then touched the gates, which immediately flew open, and such streams of glory came out as seemed to constrain him to draw back some paces, as being a greater delight than he could yet bear; but presently he went forward and entered the holy city. There he saw an innumerable company of glorified spirits, and the patriarchs in a circle. Next to that circle he saw another, of the prophets; and within that, all the apostles. He then cried out, "But where is Jesus?" The adorable God-man then appeared in view; which sight filled his soul with joy inexpressible; and he observed

beams of glory which proceeded from our Lord, and touched every one of the glorified spirits, showing how all their glory sprang from their union with the supreme Good. His ecstasy was now so great that he cried out, and shouted the name of Jesus till he awoke. He told me that for about three days he scarcely knew where he was, his soul was so wrapped up in the heavenly vision. I felt my soul much refreshed by his conversation.

Sunday, March 30.—On Tuesday night I dreamed I was sitting by a table, on which lay the large volume of my dear Mr. Fletcher's Life. I was at that time very thoughtful about the printing of his Works, fearing any thing should be done that he would not approve. He came into the room, but I did not look up; and being desirous to be alone, I went into the next room and sat down. He called to me with his own well known voice, saying, "What, art thou so afraid of me as to go out of the room as I come in?" I started up and cried, No, my dear, I am not afraid of thee. I then returned, and sat down in my chair by the table; he sat on the other side. Then taking up the book he said, "There is no need for anxiety; I would have thee read this book; it will give thee pleasure. Take it up now; thou wilt find something that will encourage thee." Two days after I received a letter from Mr. Benson, informing me that a person in London had translated Mr. Fletcher's French poem into English, and they had some thought of printing it with his other Works, if found to be done in a respectable manner. Then I understood that my dear love told me of it, in order to prevent the uneasiness I should have felt had he not shown a degree of approval. I had no recollection of the poem; and that he should know I had not read the Life, and thus comfort me under the anxiety which I felt, was very pleasing to me. O how indulging is my heavenly Father!

May 24.—A thought has much dwelt on my mind for some days, that we should many times in a day ask ourselves, Am I now causing joy or grief in heaven? We are told there is joy in heaven over the sinner that repenteth, and, by parity of reason, over the advance of every child of God. Those words (spoken of our Lord) follow me much, *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*. He hath taken our whole nature, and so will abide eternally.

But his passions are all regulated by the Divine nature. So in the case of Lazarus it is said, *He groaned in spirit, and troubled himself.** It appears then that he looks with delight or with mourning on his children. It is said, "As a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride, so will the Lord thy God rejoice over thee; he will rest in his love. He will joy over thee with singing." And the idea that by turning away from this hurtful thought I am giving pleasure to my Saviour, and resisting Satan, is a very animating conviction; but, alas! I cannot express it in words: it is as if Jesus said, "My desire is toward thee; let me not lose one thought."

June 30.—Blessed be the name of the Lord for the answers to prayer I have experienced of late! One above all the rest demands my loudest praise. I have long been crying for my soul to be all eye, so that I should discern an unprofitable thought in its approach; and now I have, for one particular day, felt this power continually for about a month. I do not mean that my thoughts do not wander from the various objects which occur;† but if a thought would present itself so as to take up the mind unnecessarily, in a moment I am warned and enabled to stand upon my guard. O my adorable Saviour! come and fully possess my soul, and give me such a measure of thy enlightening Spirit that *I may clearly discern the things which are given me of God!*

Monday, July 7.—Last night, when I came out from the society meeting, I found a letter from London, informing me of the death of my dear brother Samuel, who died about eleven in the forenoon on Friday last, the 4th of this month. I have had much encouragement in my mind about him for some days, and so have some of my spiritual friends. His death seems to bring eternity very near.

August 14.—Three seven years have I walked in widowhood. O what a situation was I in this day twenty-one years! What trials have I since known, but what mercies also! Yes, my gracious Lord, I find thou dost order all for me! This day I renew my covenant to be

* In the original it is so.—Ed.

† See Mr. Wesley's admirable sermon on wandering thoughts.—Ed.

all the Lord's! I know not what bitter cups may yet be preparing for me, but I here cast myself wholly into thy hands! My body is weak with age, and threatened with many painful disorders; but I leave all to thy adorable will. Miss Tooth seems threatened with a consumption. This would be an unspeakable loss, for she takes off all care from me, and is in every way an abundant comfort and help; but this I also offer up to thee, my Lord.

September 12.—This day I enter into my sixty-eighth year. None of my family have lived to my age. Lord, what shall I do to live more abundantly to thee? O that I may take up every cross, and embrace it as a precious jewel! O, the great advantage of living in the will of God!

November 12.—A memorable day to me! This day twenty-five years I gave my hand to my dear Mr. Fletcher. O, what a oneness of soul do I feel with him still! Lord, give me the meetness to partake of that joy he lives in! I have of late been convinced it would help my faith to consider deeply what great loving kindness and guardian care I have experienced from the Lord, since he hath taken my dear partner to glory. I may say indeed, *goodness and mercy hath followed me all my days*. What a mercy that this house is still my home! The vicar might have wanted it himself, or he might wish to let it to some other person. But in this Mr. Burton hath shown me much kindness, as also Mr. Kenerson, the patron; may God bless them for it, and give them both everlasting habitations! At this time I feel my soul drawn out after a closer union with the Lord.

February 13, 1807. Though *offences will come*, yet we have great cause to be thankful that the work prospers. Since the beginning of this year we have had seven triumphant deaths. One of them was Mrs. B. When I first saw her she was an object of great pity. She had lived in affluence, but was reduced almost to beggary. She had no bed. I procured a little one for her, and she praised the Lord abundantly. She had for more than half a year lain on the ground. "It was," said she, "very hard, and my bones were sore; but I enjoyed such communion with God, it bore me above all." She has suffered much for many years, but always had the conso-

lations of God, and sometimes very abundant. A few weeks before her death, when her son came home one day, she said, "I have had such a manifestation of the love of God as I cannot describe. I think if I was in heaven I could not enjoy more than I do!" This continued with her to the last. She was one of the Lord's hidden jewels indeed, little known or noticed among men. Her appearance was mean, but *she was glorious within*. Another was a child not twelve years old, the son of W. Smith. He had a long and severe illness, during which the Lord brought him to rest in the will of God to a degree which amazed those about him, and much comforted his parents. Some time before his death, he had a wonderful manifestation of the love of God. He cried out to his father and mother to be all in earnest. "It is," said he, "worth your while. O, what do I see! how pretty! how sweet! how grand! how glorious! Then, as conversing with the Lord, he said, "Lord Jesus, shall I come now? Shall I come now? I want to be with thee. Let me come now!" He became silent for some time; then he said, "Not now, I must suffer longer." Three or four times after this he had glorious manifestations. In one of them, he told his father how his soul had been grieved to see their workmen play and trifle. "Sure," said he, "they forgot that God sees them every moment; and when I think of backsliders, it makes my heart ready to bleed to think there are any who do not love Jesus." He pointed to a chest of drawers and said, "Father, if those drawers were full of gold, I would not take it for what I feel and see." When near death, as he sat in the chair, (for he could not lie down nor lean back, for want of breath,) he told them how happy he was, and yet how very bad. He then said, "Father, put the pillow, I will try to lean back." When this was done, he cried out, "Triumph! triumph!" He then fell into a sweet sleep for about three-quarters of an hour; when turning his face on one side, he died without any struggle. The others all died in clear light, but I have not the particulars.

March 5.—Glory be to God, I see more and more his tender care is over me and mine. I have had a time of trial from Miss Tooth's illness this last fortnight, but much mercy was mixed with judgment. Lord, spare her, if it

please thee ! Thou knowest I have need of her help ; but thy will is the arm of the rock I cling to when the waves go over my head, and I know that rock will never fail me.

A thought has struck my mind, that from some things mentioned in the notes subjoined to the Portrait of St. Paul, edited by Mr. Gilpin, after my dear husband's death, he might be thought to favour the opinions of Baron Swedenborg. I therefore think it my duty to bear witness to the contrary. The first book which he saw contained but little amiss, and Mr. Wesley having observed concerning it, "I think it will neither do good nor harm," Mr. Fletcher, soon after writing to his brother, who had mentioned it, observed that it was a book which he did not condemn. But when he had seen a little more of the baron's Works, he said to me one day, "Polly, I believe Mr. — will be a Swedenborger, and I am very sorry for it." I said, Well, if he can believe that there are wax candles and feasts in heaven, he must have strange ideas. Mr. Fletcher replied, "My dear, thou dost not perceive the snake in the grass. These books deny the atonement, and so strike at the very root of all true religion." In the same mind he continued to the last.

April 3.—I feel within these few days a drawing nearer to the Lord ; and a loving recollection of his presence to be the element in which alone my soul can grow. I feel an increasing expectation that the Lord will come, and take up his abode in my soul. That verse in Jeremiah, chap. xxxii, is much on my mind, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul." I look now hourly for this, that according to my former promise, I may "feed on Carmel and Bashan," and my soul be satisfied in a close communion with God.

August 14.—This day twenty-two years my dearly beloved husband entered glory. When I awoke this morning, the first thought presented to my mind was,—How has my soul grown in these twenty-two years ? I felt a deep sinking before the Lord, that it had not grown

more abundantly. I am sensible of a progress, but alas ! it is very small when compared with what might have been. I place in Jesus my whole confidence. My hope is in him as my great high priest, and those words are very sweet to me, "The author and finisher of our faith." O my adorable Saviour, I am as the clay in thy hand ; make me such a vessel as thou shalt choose me to be ! Some things have occurred which, years ago, would have been a great trial. But I now see and feel a great beauty in the cross ; and have such evident proof that he orders all, that I can leave all my cares in his hand.

September 11.—If I live till to-morrow I shall be sixty-eight years old, and my dear Mr. Fletcher would on that day have been seventy-eight. O how long has he been in glory before me ! He was ripe, and sweetly gathered into the garner. Lord, prepare thy poor creature to follow him. I have had my niece Whittingham (my dear sister's daughter) with me for some time, whom I had not seen since she was twelve years old. I have found much satisfaction in the interview. Blessed be God for the work wrought on her soul, and for the pious husband the Lord hath provided for her. How much better is she off than if she had remained in the world ! Truly, "Godliness hath the promise of this life, and of that which is to come." I am surrounded with blessings ; I want no earthly comfort. O that I had a more grateful heart.

December 15.—I have been a fortnight laid aside from a bad cold, and much weakness on my lungs ; but what cause have I to praise the Lord ! I have experienced his tender care in many ways. One night, when more ill than before, I was offering up my soul and body for time and eternity, into the hand of my gracious Redeemer, and longing for a fuller preparation for that day, which I saw could not be far off ; and being hardly able to keep in bed for want of breath, I found, all at once, as if I were surrounded, or overshadowed with a sweet and sacred power ! I cannot describe it ; but I felt as if I was so encircled by, and drawn into the presence of God, that nothing could approach to hurt me ! I said, Not a thought can arise "to disturb my beloved till he please." It lasted about half an hour, and showed me how easy the Saviour can enclose the soul as an island in the midst of the sea !

December 31.—O my God, how do I close this year ! I am still confined to my chamber, and mend but slowly. But I feel the Lord is at work on my soul. I pant for a more lively faith, and blessed be God, I found an increase since this illness. Truly, he makes all my bed in my sickness, and keeps me night and day.

January 1, 1808.—And do I see the beginning of another year ? Yes, my Saviour ! thou dost yet spare me. I have been some time in a near prospect of death. O that I may use every moment to gain more of thy likeness ! I cannot be far from eternity. O my God, make me ready ! I have not been able to begin this year with the dear people as usual, being still confined, yet mercy is in all my cup. How light are my pains compared with others !

February 9.—Blessed be the Lord, he hath wonderfully renewed my strength ! I have been out these three weeks, and have gone through my meetings in the week as before ; and praised be the Lord ! I feel greater liberty than ever. The other day I found among some old papers a few lines I wrote many years ago. They were blessed to me ; and, as I hope they will be a blessing to others, I transcribe them.

Saturday, July 18, 1761. We had a good time at the meeting this morning, at brother Biggs'. Mr. Fletcher was with us ; and as I was speaking of my discouragements, he said, " Make more use of Jesus. The reason why you find a spark of faith and love when you repeat those words, ' On thine arm do I trust,'—which you do not feel at other times is, because at that time you make an act of faith ; but you do not continue that act of faith, which is the reason you do not always feel the same. If ' our anchor is cast within the veil,' we must be casting it farther and farther, that we may draw our souls nearer and nearer to God. There is nothing which draws my soul to God like the consideration of his love to me ; it is on that I must fix my eyes, and when I feel my heart has wandered, and I am cold and dead, and unable to watch and pray, this is my method,—I return just as I am to Christ, and cast myself again on his mercy, pleading, Thou art the righteousness of the ungodly, the strength of the weak, the helper of the helpless ; thou art the friend of

sinners ; in short, he is the God of fallen man." He again observed, "He doth not require us to stay for a broken heart ; for what would repentance avail if he did not work it ? We also lose much for want of thankfulness. We should praise God for every good desire we feel, though, perhaps, as yet, we have not power to put it in practice."

Mr. Maxfield was, at that time, a very blessed instrument among us, and great power attended his word. Although very painful things afterward occurred.* I do not think myself clear unless I bear testimony to that truth. I took down a few particulars of a sermon of his, which I will here repeat.

Sunday, November 2, 1761.—Mr. Maxwell preached on the history of the Israelites taking Jericho. He observed, "By what is said of Jericho, we may be instructed concerning the evils contained in our hearts. It was the 'Captain of the Lord's host,' by whose command Joshua acted—and this Captain was our Lord Jesus, who still goeth before every one who believes in his name." But, added he, "there is one thing very material to observe—'Jericho was straitly shut up, none went out, and none came in.' Now, is this the case with your hearts ? Are you watching over your ear, your eye, your tongue ? Are you careful neither to see, hear, nor speak any thing, but what tends to draw your souls to God ? Many of you will perhaps ask, Why did not the walls of Jericho, my corrupt heart, fall before the Lord, as I have been seeking so many years ? I will tell you why—your Jericho is not 'straitly shut up.' It may be that every idle story your neighbour brings to your ears, or foolish imagination Satan suggests to your minds, finds a ready entertainment, and your minds are filled with unprofitable thoughts, which, like a crowd, get between you and your Saviour. You might seek thus for ten thousand years, and be no nearer. Every thought that doth not tend toward God, if indulged, stops the work of sanctification ; and you will never advance toward holiness, till you exert with resolution the power which God hath given you, in

* He separated from Mr. Wesley, and did much harm in the London society.—Ed.

resisting steadfastly every thought and word which would come between your soul and Christ. But those who are thus watching and keeping their hearts, so that nothing can find entrance till it be examined, and known from whence it comes—let them take courage. I am sure your souls thus waiting will not wait long before your ‘Joshua will command them to shout!’ Only let them believe, and continue to watch. The Israelites were bid not to shout, nor make any noise, till they were commanded; and when that moment should come was known only to Joshua. They believed and followed. So let us hang by a simple faith on Jesus, listening every moment what his Spirit shall dictate to our hearts; for ‘the Captain of the Lord’s host’ is with us, and ‘he hath his sword drawn in his hand’ to conquer all our adversaries. And though you feel your sinful tempers, be not discouraged, for the inhabitants of Jericho were not only alive to the last, but in full strength. When the power of faith comes, the strong walls of unbelief shall drop down, and you shall go up and possess the good land! How little and idle it would appear in the eyes of these enemies, thus to walk round the walls, blowing rams’ horns! So we think our labour and spiritual thriving avail nothing; but only let us continue to cut off every word or thought which would give food to the old man, and thus obey, in firm reliance, that ‘our Joshua will be the author and finisher of our faith,’ and we shall find him ‘faithful who hath promised, who also will do it.’”

March 3.—This was a good morning to me; the Lord was very present when I awoke; and I had such a view of the all-sufficiency of the Saviour as I cannot express! Such a safety in trusting in his arm alone! That thought struck me—many great kings have said, “I have no cause to fear, for I have vast armies, great allies,” &c. But O, what a fly did it all appear to me, when compared to the power I felt in that simple word, “Jesus is on my side!”

March 18.—Yesterday I found an increase of faith. O, what repeated proofs I have that the Lord doth watch over his poor creature with guardian care! I had something to do in the work of God which was attended with difficulty; and yet I scarcely knew how to go out in the

sharp east wind. But O, how was every thing ordered! I found also such liberty in visiting the sick, as if every word was immediately given me. I had such a view into the way of faith—and the atonement was made so clear, as I cannot express. I saw also the Lord's tender care in a variety of other occurrences. What a freedom from care hath the soul who singly trusts in Jesus!

March 29.—I cannot be thankful as I would for the restoration of health which I feel. Cold as it is, I have been enabled to keep to all my meetings—seven or eight times a week; and my nights are as comfortable as when I was but twenty. I feel no complaint of my breath, when still, nor in bed. O, that I might use all my little strength to the glory of God! I see death very near, notwithstanding this amendment.

On looking over my journal, I miss some observations which I wrote on the death of my dear father in Christ, Mr. Wesley. I think I must have mislaid that sheet, or perhaps lent, and so lost it. However, I wish now to bear my testimony to the truth. I shall have cause to bless God throughout eternity that ever I knew that precious and highly favoured servant of the Lord Jesus. He was indeed a star in the Almighty's hand, and a wonderful instrument of good to our nation. When I was very low, after my dear husband's death, among the many gloomy thoughts which came to my mind, one was, that I had not so profited by Mr. Wesley's excellent advice as I might have done; and I wrote to him expressing that sentiment; to which he gave me the following answer: "My dear sister I do not remember you ever disobliged me in any thing. On the contrary, you have for these many years done every thing in your power to oblige me." Indeed I saw it my duty so to do, and must acknowledge my many and great obligations to that great and good man.

May 26.—How good do I find it to lie quiet in the hand of Jesus! All, all works for good. I have been ill with a cold three weeks, and trust I am laid aside for a season in order to gain the blessings of retirement. Some fatigues which have occurred from company rather threw me back. The providence of God appeared so clear I could only say, O how true is that word,—

"Jesus doth my burden bear,
Jesus takes my every care."

Some nights when I could not lie down for the cough, and want of breath, I felt a sweet sense of the presence of God, and of the heavenly spirits! Not any particular rapture, but a solemn consciousness; and those words were with me continually,—

'Do what thou wilt with this weak clay,
But let me all thy mind fulfil;
But let me all thy will obey.'

June 1.—Blessed be the Lord, I am better, and was enabled to meet the class yesterday morning, though I spoke with difficulty. This morning I have found an increase of faith in reading the 10th chapter of Hebrews. O, that perfect, that complete sacrifice! Yes, he hath once for all paid the whole debt, there is therefore a free and open way into the holiest! I see death so near, I find it on my heart to pray for, and take thought of, the work of God in this place. O, my Saviour, cause it to increase abundantly! Keep away stumbling blocks, and pour out thy Spirit in a peculiar manner on my dear husband's orphans. I could wish Miss Tooth to remain in Madeley, if a way should be made for her, and that she might be able to take in the preachers. I can see no other way so likely and proper; and I think it would be the most comfortable for them. All is in the hand of the Lord. She has the cause of God truly at heart, and if her health is restored, she will, I believe, be very useful to the people. That word I think of with pleasure, *All things are beautiful in their season*. So I trust I shall find it. O, that death may have no sting for me, and that her way may be opened before her by the Lord!

August 4.—Having been told by several persons that a report has got abroad, that my dear Mr. Fletcher expressed a sorrow for having wrote his *CHECKS TO ANTI-NOMIANISM*, and that he died in quite a different opinion, I do solemnly aver there is no truth in the assertion. So far from that, a little before his death, speaking of the hurt that so close an application had caused to his health, I said, But thou dost not repent the labour? He replied, "O no, it was a great blessing to my soul. And if my

strength was wasted thereby, it was in the cause of truth." I never knew him have the least variation in his sentiments ; and I am sure he did not willingly conceal any part of his mind from me, any more than I did from him.

I had this morning a solemn look at death. Many complaints seem to be gathering about me, and they seem to portend sufferings ; but I feel a spirit of true sacrifice, and those words are sweetly on my mind,—

" Leave to his sovereign sway
To choose and to command,
So shalt thou wondering own his way,
How wise, how good his hand !"

August 17.—From an uncommon hurry of strangers being here, and other circumstances, I have had no time for writing in my journal, though I should have liked to set down many things. All the last week was very solemn ; the day of my dear husband's death falling on the Sabbath this year, brought each scene to its own period, and caused me frequently to look back and praise the Lord, who had preserved me in the deep waters through which I at that time passed. I had a most humbling view of the little progress I have since made ; yet I found a great confidence in my *good Shepherd*, whose wise providence I have seen and experienced in a remarkable manner. He does so fit my strength to my day, and orders all in such wonderful mercy, that truly I am constrained to say, (unworthy as I am,)—

" Round me and beneath are spread
The everlasting arms."

September 12.—At eight o'clock this morning, sixty-nine years ago, I was born. How many dangers I have passed through ! But thy merciful arm has been over me, and proved by a thousand and a thousand ways, that *the hairs of my head are indeed numbered*. O, my great Deliverer ! how hast thou stood by me, and heaped mercy upon mercy on me.

September 15.—I feel a fresh beam of light upon my soul ! A farther discovery of the extent of the atonement. On Tuesday night, when at prayer, I found the eye of faith grow brighter and the open fountain more plain be-

fore me. O the liberty the believer hath of coming every moment to the Saviour! If I shut my eyes I may fancy the sun doth not shine; but the veil is not on the sun, but on my eyes. The Saviour saith, *Whosoever cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out.* Lord, give me ever to feel the sense of this truth which I now do, that every moment I may *wash my robes*, and both *make and keep them white*, for *thy blood cleanseth from all sin.*

Blessed be God, another is gone to her rest, our dear sister Benbow, the account of whom, by Miss Tooth, I had not time before to enter. "From what Mrs. Benbow has told me, I have reason to believe she had been under the drawings of God from her earliest youth. Some years since she began to come to the Monday meetings at Madeley. These she found so profitable that, although the difficulty was great owing to her weakness, she would still persevere. These last three years she has been confined by illness, but often expressed her longing desire to be at those opportunities again, if the Lord should permit. Upward of two years ago I went to see her, and I may say I have counted it my privilege and honour to visit her at every opportunity since that time. She drank in instruction from either conversation or reading. The experience and death of the children of God were the delight of her soul. Mr. Fletcher's Letters, and his Appeal, were much blessed to her. Concerning the latter she would say, 'Blessed be God for that book, for it hath taught me the way to Jesus by faith.' When I have been reading to her, observing her pain to be so violent, I have for a time laid the book aside; but she would say, 'No, read on, it does me good: it refreshes me, and gives me encouragement. O what should I do if *his everlasting arms* were not *underneath* me; but he does sweetly support me, glory be unto him.'

"She suffered great pain, even to agony, yet not one murmuring word was heard to drop from her lips. In one minute she would be crying out with the violence of the pain, the next she would be saying '*Thy will be done*, my sweet Saviour! I would suffer all thy will.

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."

I feel great peace, and those words are powerfully ap-

plied, *I know that my Redeemer liveth.* I can say with David, *Though my flesh and my heart faileth, God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.* O that word *for ever!* There is something so sweet in that word *for ever!* Another day, as I entered the room, she cried out with triumphant joy, '*His banner over me is love!* O the sweet times I have had this last week in reading the Scriptures!' Another time, as I was observing the power of Divine grace in loosing the heart from earthly attachments, she said, 'I prove that; for time was when I seemed to have ten thousand ties to this world, but now I have not one. Jesus has broke every chain.' Through all her sufferings her constant language was blessing and praising the Lord for his goodness; ever declaring all her trust and confidence was in *the atoning blood.* Often, in the midst of the most exquisite suffering, she would enumerate her mercies, saying, 'What comforts I am surrounded with! Such tender, affectionate children to nurse me! And, above all, the prayers of God's people. O I cannot tell half the things that call for thankful praise.' When the preachers or Mr. Walter visited her, she has often observed to me with delight what a blessing it was to her. On June 3d she told me she had neither doubt nor fear, nothing disturbed her; and though in the most violent pain, she cried out, 'Not one pain less! I would not have one pain less, if this is thy will, my sweet Lord Jesus!' In the night of the 7th of June she waked, and said, 'I am quite well! I have neither ache nor pain.' Miss Benbow, who sat up with her, being much affected, and not immediately replying, she again cried out, 'Nancy, I have neither ache nor pain! Give praise to the Lord! O give thanks to God!' Miss Benbow said, 'And are you happy, mother?' She answered, 'Yes, quite so.' A short time before she departed she said, 'Sweet Jesus, come quickly!' These were the last words she uttered. From this time she lay with a smiling countenance, that bespoke a sweet serenity within; and at the last she went off so quietly that they could scarcely perceive when she drew her last breath, which was on Thursday morning, June 9, 1803."

November 12.—Memorable day to me! This day twenty-seven years (the day of my marriage) I was full of anxiety at this hour; but O what cause have I had to

rejoice in the transaction of that day! As the morning approached I felt a fresh conviction that this is the day I peculiarly consecrate to my adorable Lord; and I felt it good to wait upon the Lord. My faith was invigorated, and my expectation enlarged. O how little doth all appear to me that is not eternity!

December 6.—I have been called since I wrote last to a new dispensation. I had more than two months been lame at times with my right knee, yet walked about, though with some pain. But some days since it grew worse, till last Thursday, when it was so well I could walk without a stick, and thought myself cured. That night, as I was going to bed, in a moment I felt a pain in it which rendered me quite helpless. How it will end I know not but I feel a sweetness in repeating, "My Father cannot err, and I will never choose." This trial has been much blessed to me. It brings eternity near. I have also had a deeper conviction of the need of a more earnest pursuing after entire holiness, and my mind has been more stayed on the Lord, and kept in more abundant peace. I knew not how I should be got out of the chamber, but we found a chair with wheels, which would go through the doors, so that I can be brought in and out of the study; and such a number of little helps (but to me great ones) has occurred, that I see the hand of my dear Father in all around me as I cannot express.

December 13.—Last night I had pain, but, blessed be the Lord, with a mixture of ease and rest. My complaint is said to be an inflammation on the knee bone; but I am affected in various ways. As I had to sit up in bed a good while in the night, I felt it profitable.

December 26.—This has been a solemn Christmas to me. Though confined to my room, my soul has been on a stretch for holiness, especially to-day. O what cause of praise! How truly is that promise fulfilled,* "Do not be frightened, God will make you a comfortable habitation." And so he doth indeed: and that other word, so often given me of late, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort thee." Yes, I can rely on his dear arm, and cling to his will. But O! I long that God

* See page 171.

should take up the whole of my heart as his abiding throne!

March 20, 1809.—Yesterday was a comfortable Sabbath. The Lord carried me through all the four meetings,* and blessed me with his gracious presence, glory be to his holy name! Reading those words of Baxter, "There is far more procured for us by Christ than we lost in Adam," I felt a peculiar power in it; and while meditating thereon I said in my heart, Then how great may our expectations be! Immediately that word came to my mind, *Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.* O my God, how shall I comprehend what thou hast to bestow! O for more of that sacred *violence which takes the kingdom by force!*

March 22.—We had much hurry yesterday, but, blessed be God, I felt great calmness all day. My meditation ran much on that Scripture, *He that receiveth you receiveth me*; and again, *Whatsoever ye do to one of the least of these is done unto me.* This morning, feeling some symptoms of a very painful disorder, I was offering it up to the Lord, that he might do all his will upon me, when I thought of those lines:—

"The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
And feed me with a shepherd's care;
His presence shall my wants supply,
And guard me with a watchful eye:
My noonday walks he shall attend,
And all my midnight hours defend."

I felt a power as I repeated them, but afterward doubly so, it was given me as my own. Yes, my faithful Lord, "Thou wilt not suffer me to be tempted above what I am able, but wilt, with the temptation, make a way to escape, that I may" be able to bear it. I feel an increase of both faith and love. Lord, let me grow stronger and stronger in thee!

April 5.—I have lately received some particular answers to prayer. Lord, let my gratitude bear proportion to my mercies! I have been now able to go out for several weeks, and to attend all my meetings, often very comfortably, even eight or nine times in a week. My breath is

* It seems she had now recovered from her lameness.—Ed.

"I need!"

Last night
of prayer.
though I believe
that now I may
with S. C., A
there, sitting
to a walk
only, "I must
A woman
You know
walks there
to grapple with
devils, for the
then, turni
to help me
"I will go;
of hell cannot

My dream

do not suffer me to miss one instance in
so such an honour ! O Lord, grant thy
that I may lie at thy feet, and listening
power to obey it. Give me, O Lord,
of recollected prayer ! That prayer
not go unanswered. And, O my Lord,
all the mercy and love thou hast shown
earthly creature, that thou wouldst favour
of the holy Scriptures ! Thou knowest,
sealed book till thou openest the seals
in me, I beseech thee, that teaching of
may discern the deep truths, the glo-
and all the sacred mysteries which lead to
with thyself ! That I may, in my mea-
and, with all saints, the length, and
in, and height, of thy incomprehensible

morning I was led to look back on the
at life ; and I was amazed to see how in
such tender love had been mixed with
in my father's house, though I had
pass through which were trials and
when I could get into my own room I
comfortable, and had a continual sense
deliver me out of all when his time was
was removed from my father's house, to
of two rooms at Hoxton, though really
it appeared as a most sweet asylum to
the little house on the roadside, I
! And though there was much, very
giveness for in all those places, yet there
blessings ; and I can recollect many mes-
in them all. I next removed to Lay-
I seemed in the land of Goshen ; and
look back and wonder how I stood under
I had to encounter, yet, at the time
swallowed up in mercies ! At Cross
ure, I had many humiliations and cares,
thought that situation better than all the
if the Lord would open me a way to abide
be a great favour. But O, he had some-
better for me. He brought me through

better than it has been for years; and though my limbs are weak and stiff, I can walk so as to visit some sick who are near to us, and go up and down stairs many times a day: blessed be the Lord, who holds all our disorders in his hand, and times them as he sees good. O that I may use all my remaining strength to his glory!

April 26.—Glory be to God, I have felt him working on my soul for some days, and drawing my mind into a more steady recollection. Reading the account of Israel passing over Jordan, I was led to reflect that I had nothing to do but *believe*, and follow the Lord, and all difficulties would vanish out of my way in spiritual things, as they have done in temporal. He will fulfil all his gracious promises. Yes, my faithful Saviour, I look for the blessed moment when I shall have my delight in the Almighty beyond all I have ever known. I feel a glorious day approaching. Lord, hasten the hour!

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fire and water, to this spot,—to Madeley : and of all my situations, none hath been equal to this. O the loving kindness of my God ! I remember in the year 1766, being from home, on a journey with sister Ryan, and under very great trials, both outward and inward, as I was one day in prayer, those words were applied to me with a peculiar power, *I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied on Mount Ephraim and Gilead. At that time, and in those days, shall the iniquity of Israel be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sin of Judah, and it shall not be found, for I will pardon them whom I reserve.* This was so deeply impressed on my mind, that when after some months' absence we returned home, I looked out, (as well as I was able) the meaning of the words in the Hebrew Lexicon. I now repeat it here, being conscious that at this very time I feel the beginning of the accomplishment. Outwardly it is indeed made good. I am in a most peaceful habitation ; and some of the clusters of grapes from Canaan I do taste of, and sit as on the banks of Jordan, waiting to be brought over.

August 10.—At present I am under a particular exercise. Some time ago, I found my relations deeply laid on my mind, especially my dear brother William, and my brother's widow. I thought, I have not been faithful to them ; and feared, as I had not seen them for twenty years, I never should see them again. I laid it before the Lord in earnest prayer. A circumstance occurred which gave me some encouragement. But how was I surprised when I received a letter that they were coming to see me ! They are now here. My soul is drawn out much in their behalf. Lord, I look unto thee, be thou my helper, and enable me to confess thee faithfully before men, that I may not have the blood of souls found upon me !

24.—Glory be to God, I have found him very gracious indeed. All has been as I could have wished, and I had freedom and comfort in our different interviews. I saw the hand of the Lord in every circumstance. O what a Saviour have I ! Since that time some trials have occurred which have affected my health. I feel a great inward sinking, and by various symptoms, it seems that the Lord is reminding me the hour is not far off. O my adorable

Saviour, give me but to glorify thee to the last moment, to feel my whole will lost in thine !

September 12.—Lord, appear in my behalf ! I feel my body grow very feeble, and I want a fuller baptism of thy Spirit. My confidence is all in thee ; but I want to feel an intimate, close communion. Once I should have been well pleased with what I at present feel ; but when death seems very near, there needs a peculiar smile of the Lord to carry the soul triumphantly through the sufferings of that season. Indeed there are moments when he doth assure me, *As my day my strength shall be* ; and of late I have found such help in times of trial that I am greatly encouraged. This day I am seventy years old. Ah ! my Lord, how little have I done for thee in seventy years ! But I look to mere mercy. My hope is in the Saviour ! I have nothing to plead.

September 19.—Last night I was restless and disturbed, and as I lay awake I thought, Is not God my strongest desire ? What would now give me the most pleasure ? My heart answered, “A smile from my Lord.” I then thought of heaven, and considered myself as afresh united to my dear husband, my Sally, and my friend Ryan. The thought was pleasing, and raised gratitude in my heart. But when I turned my thoughts to a sight of, and union with my Saviour,—O how superior a spring of joy did I feel ! I think I can truly say,—“Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of thee !” But, Lord, I am not satisfied. Ah, no ; I want such a possession of thy love, such an intimate union as every moment to feel thy approving smile.

November 12.—Twenty-eight years this day, and at this hour, I gave my hand and heart to John William de la Flechere. A profitable and blessed period of my life. I feel, at this moment, a more tender affection toward him than I did at that time, and by faith I now join my hand afresh with his. My Sally, and my friend Ryan too,—We are one in Jesus. O that I may follow them as they followed Christ !

January 6, 1810.—Glory be to thee, my precious Saviour, for the great mercies I have received the last year ! O how many striking answers to prayer ! I feel also an increase of faith, and begin this year with a more firm

confidence in thy faithful promises. Yes, my gracious Lord, I abandon all, all into thy hand, both for time and eternity. I have been reading again that excellent work of my dear husband, "The Portrait of St. Paul." I had not read it for many years, but, O how sweet did I find it! It is amazing that it should be so clear and perfect as it is, when I considered what he said to me about it,—that it was a rough draught wrote in his illness, when abroad; and which he intended to write all over again, and to improve, had he been spared to do it. I felt a sweet unction as I read it, and am very glad it is taken into the ninth volume of his Works.

February 11.—I have been ill for about two months, with a complaint on my lungs, but was enabled to keep to all the meetings till Tuesday last, when I grew much worse. My breath is exceeding short, and the cough very severe. By the expectoration it appears to be such a consumption as old people have. I am glad I have had these opportunities with the dear people, though perhaps I have suffered by it. The Lord has been very present with us of late. Those words have been much on my mind, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth I desire in comparison of thee." I feel no care about my body, only that I may do and suffer all the will of God, as a Christian; that "patience may have its perfect work."

February 25.—I still remain ill, though something better; and it is a great addition to the trial, that my dear friend and kind nurse, Miss Tooth, appears to have a consumptive disorder. This morning I was laying all before the Lord, and felt a desire to try myself in every point of sacrifice. I felt his will above all. Afterward that word bore on my mind, "Stand still and see the salvation of God."

April 27.—Yesterday was a day of trial, as to outward things; but in the morning those words were in a peculiar manner laid on my mind, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass." I did not understand what it meant at first, but before night it was explained.

O my faithful God, thou knowest all that can approach thy children; and thy guardian care prevents our trials

by a call to a fresh trust in thee ! Many scenes of suffering appear before me. My left breast I am told is again likely to prove cancerous ; but I lie still in the hand of the Lord.

May 6.—As I was rising this morning, Mr. Grimshaw's advice came to my mind : " At your first awaking spend half an hour on five things. First, Return thanks for the mercies of the night. Second, Pray for a blessing on the new day. Third, Examine the state of your heart. Fourth, Meditate on some spiritual subject. Fifth, Lay a plan for your employment of the day." I felt my heart drawn to praise, and to entreat protecting mercy, and spiritual guidance, for the ensuing day, and felt my petition was heard. Then I looked up for a spiritual subject of meditation. Immediately it occurred, " I go to prepare a place for you." Then, " I am the way, the truth, and the life." I felt it a profitable time.

September 6.—The other day brother Tranter preached in my room very profitably, and told us afterward a remarkable answer to prayer. Mr. R. Crowther and his wife were going to their circuit in a borrowed gig. They came to the house of a pious man and woman, accustomed to receive the messengers of Jesus Christ. Having no place for the gig, it stood out. There were some persecuting spirits in the place. In the night, the man and his wife found they could not sleep, and said one to another, I feel a great weight on my mind,—perhaps some hurt is doing to the gig. They got up and went out. They found one wheel was gone. They looked all about, but could not find it. They returned into the house and went to prayer, laying before the Lord the difficulty Mr. Crowther would be in. At last one of them said, It comes to my mind they have carried it to such a place, (about two miles off,) and thrown it into the swamp. The other said, Let us go and see. About one o'clock they set off. When they came to the place, which was full of water and mud, and covered with rushes, they looked about, but could see nothing of the wheel. They then saw a large stick ; upon which the man said, Perhaps on this stick they carried it ; let us try again. He then took up the stick and groped in the mud. Presently he felt the wheel. They got it out, brought it home, and put

it on the gig. So when Mr. and Mrs. Crowther got up, the gig was ready for them to set off. How true is that word, "Call upon me in the time of trouble, so I will hear thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

September 12.—At eight o'clock this morning I was solemnly struck with the thought—I am, at this hour, (the time I have been told I was born,) seventy-one years of age. I was, as I have been told, in great danger of death, from my tongue being tied, and much bleeding ensued from having it cut. It was thought I should be dumb. But thou, O Lord! saw good to give me my speech. Ah, Lord, how have I used that great talent! How often have I abused thy goodness, and offended with my tongue! I feel an earnest cry for a full and perfect devotedness of soul to thee; and my faith seems to be increased in the belief I shall be so. While speaking on Monday night, in a very full meeting, the Lord was very present, and I saw such a great salvation before me as I cannot express. And has my Saviour borne *all* the curse? And has he taken our nature into the Godhead? O, what may we not expect! Lord, enlarge my faith!

November 24.—Since I last wrote, I have seen much of the goodness of the Lord. What an answer of prayer is the amendment of Miss Tooth! My gracious Lord would not give me sorrow upon sorrow. O, how good it is to *stand still and see his salvation!* This summer I have been better in health than for some years, and have found much of his presence in the work of God.

On the 12th of this month, the day of renewed dedication of myself to God, I felt a blessing in the remembrance of the precious gift given me twenty-nine years ago. O, what a train of good things have sprung therefrom! O, my Lord, none but thyself can know what an advantage I have drawn from that union! O, that my dear husband's prayers may be fully answered in me, that I may become *the habitation of God through the Spirit!*

December 18.—Being ill, I could not go out, but prayed if the Lord saw it good, that I might have strength for Sunday noon, and Monday night, the times when we have large congregations—and, blessed be his name! I have had hitherto the answer to my prayer. I felt this morning very lame in my knees, but yet able to walk about;

and, in the room last night, the Lord was with me, and brought me comfortably through.

January 7, 1811.—And do I see another year! O, my God, may I live this year as I have never yet done! I have had, for six weeks, a return of my winter cough, but have been enabled to go out on Sunday noon, and Monday night as usual. Blessed be the Lord for that indulgence! Never did eternity appear so near. I feel its importance; but O, I want it to drink up every thought, and fill up every-moment.

January 14.—The complaint on my lungs grows worse. I seem to be going fast. Saturday and yesterday were days of recollection, blessed be God! I went out yesterday at noon, and had a comfortable time with the dear people. I read and spoke an hour. The subject was, Jacob blessing his sons. I seemed to be no worse, and on my return had a tolerable night; but this morning I feel my breath much affected, and my strength seems to go fast. Eternity looks very sweet, yet I have *fiery darts*. I long for a clearer view—but I praise the Lord for more constant power to obey that command, *Pray without ceasing*.

February 9.—Those words seem to dwell mightily on my mind, "Praying always, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." Lord give me the power this day! Let my spirit every moment be looking out for thee, as *the watchman for the morning*. The Lord has been drawing my soul nearer to himself for some days. O, how my soul longs to be wholly lost in God! This day I have been greatly humbled under a sense of the little progress I have made, seeing my lot hath been cast with the most excellent of the earth.

May 25.—*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits!* I am surrounded with mercies. Sure none ever had more cause for thankfulness. O, that my heart could overflow with praise in proportion thereto! O, my Saviour, purify my soul unto thyself! I know thou hast *all power*. The other day, as a useless thought occurred to my mind, I felt that word with a solemn weight—*The place where his honour dwelleth*. It called me back in a moment, with that idea, that my soul is the place where his honour ought to dwell. It is a great thing to keep

the heart with all diligence from the dangerous avenue of the imagination. My soul doth rejoice over some who have been brought in of late. One young man who was very wicked, came to one of the meetings; and hearing Miss Tooth observe, "We must have that faith which brings purity of heart, and power over sin," he thought, I am sure I have no such faith.—From that hour the Lord began to work on his soul. The conviction was deep; and his wife, his father and mother, and a cousin, were stirred up through him, and are all now members of the society. Glory be to God, he continues all athirst both for his own soul and others. "Every moment, Lord, I also need the merit of thy death."

July 23.—O, how faithful is God! None ever trusted in him and was confounded. Much of his loving kindness have I seen of late in the times of united worship. Yes, my adorable Lord, thou hast helped thy poor creature, and given me to feel the words which I spoke. Several have been blessed, and most sweetly brought into pure love, and an awakening seems to spread among believers to press forward, and seek the rest which remains for the children of God.

August 14.—What did I feel this day twenty-six years, when at the dying bed of my beloved husband! And what have I gone through since that time! Well, it hath been all for good. I have needed every bitter cup I have had to drink; but what mercies have I also received! What tender care hath my almighty and loving Redeemer shown in my behalf! That word hath indeed been fulfilled, *A judge of the widow is God in his holy habitation*. But I might have grown much more than I have. O, my Saviour, show me how it is now with my soul! Blessed be the name of the Lord, I feel my conscience more and more tender, and a greater power to embrace the cross, and to keep in the presence of God. It is a season of trial, but I expect much spiritual good to arise therefrom. I long to be lost and swallowed up in God.

September 12.—Glory be to thee, my gracious Redeemer, who hast preserved me seventy-two years! I have been for some time very poorly with the complaint on my lungs; and one day as I was sitting in the study, thinking what I might have to go through, I felt applied to my

mind a word my dear husband spoke to me, "Thou shalt not suffer long;" then he added, "Hope to the end, in Jesus hope; you cannot fail if God is love." My heart answered, *God is love*, and I shall prove his faithfulness, whatever I have to go through. Blessed be God, I am still enabled to keep up my meetings, though with labour, and we have much of the presence of God. We have now got three new preachers on the circuit. Lord, make their word powerful! We have prayed much for them.

September 19.—Last night in my sleep that word was spoken to me, *None shall pluck thee out of my Father's hand*. I did not wake, but in my sleep made reflections on it. O, my precious Lord, thou art gracious; but I long for a closer union with thee! My breath is very short on the least motion; and yet I can go up and down to the meetings, blessed be God! We have been reading in the family of late an account of the martyrs. O, how I admired the power of God in them! Lord, how poor a disciple am I, ready to shrink at a little suffering! O, Lord, increase my faith! Last night I was uncommonly ill; but as I lay quiet, it was spoken as if to both ear and heart, "Give to the winds thy fears." Then followed the whole verse, with great power:—

"Give to the winds thy fears,
Hope, and be undismay'd,
God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears,
God shall lift up thy head."

October 16.—To-day in reading the first and second chapters of Deuteronomy, where Moses bids them trust in the Lord who had done such wonders for them in Egypt, and in the wilderness, &c.; I was led to look back through my past life, and consider the tender care the Lord hath taken of me even to this hour, yea, in the smallest things, as well as in the greatest. O, what wonders I could relate! O, my precious Lord, increase my faith and love, I pray thee, abundantly! I see eternity very near. Lord, open my eyes to a clearer view of that blessed world!

November 22.—Solemn thoughts the twelfth of this month rested on my mind, and also great thankfulness. Blessed be God for that sweet and gracious union com-

menced with my dear husband thirty years ago, and eternally to last. My asthmatic disorder increases, and sometimes in the meetings I feel much difficulty. Well, all is right. Thy will, O, my precious Saviour! is all. I feel a pain in the thought of giving up the Sunday noon and Monday night meetings. If the Lord would be pleased to give me strength for these seasons, I should be thankful. I wish to give my last breath to the dear people of God.

December 27.—O, my soul, why dost thou not praise the Lord in a more abundant manner! Surely I am in *a land flowing with milk and honey*. Last night, when uncommonly ill with my asthma, I was obliged to sit up in my bed a good while, and it seemed as if my breath would stop. O, how gracious was the Lord! I felt such a sense of quiet safety as I cannot express! I thought, what a mercy is a good bed; a fire in my room—while many poor creatures are starving with cold this hard frost! a kind friend in the next bed, who will attend my call; and, above all, a God of love to trust in! I said, Lord, speak to me! Immediately that word passed through my mind,—

“Jesus doth my burden bear,
Jesus takes my every care.”

I thought of the great and amazing transaction commemorated at this season, and foretold for four thousand years! Truly, “the secret of the Lord is with those who fear him.” While the Jews expected him to come in great pomp, he came as a babe in the manger, quite concealed and unknown, except to a few! Here is a lesson! Some even now can find no comfort, except in something great, even in religion! How often have I been thus deceived! But now I see in another light. We are to lay hold on the smallest encouragement; we are to accept a crumb—and by looking in the word, and feeding on it, the power follows. As he says, “Incline thine ear; hear, and thy soul shall live!”

January 1, 1812.—Lord, let me begin this year with thee! I have cause to praise the Lord for a good night, and am much better since I have kept in the house. But, O my Lord, wilt thou give me once more to go out among the dear people? Well, “Thy will be done!” all is right

that thy providence ordains. On the fifth of this month I shall have been thirty years in this house. That promise, given me at Bath, comes strongly to my mind, "I will bring Israel again to her own habitation." Truly the Lord hath done so. I have drunk a bitter cup in losing my dear husband, yet I am so filled with blessings, and have such comforts and helps, that I may say no kind of good is withheld from me. I have also communion with my friends above; a little while and we shall meet to part no more. O my God, I beseech thee, let me live this year, if spared, as I have never yet done!

February 6.—Many mercies I have seen in the month past. Though I have not got my voice yet sufficiently for the meetings, yet the Lord hath given us such helpers, that all has been kept up with advantage. Glory be to his name! We are very comfortable with our preachers; they are so kind and friendly, we are quite of one heart, and the work prospers. I have had of late a deeper view into the mystery of redemption, and felt much power in that word, "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

June 19.—The dear people so flock to us that my room will scarcely hold them, though we consider it as holding three hundred, and the Lord hath been very present indeed. I was so recovered as to get out in March, and have been able ever since to attend the meetings. I have a prospect of great sufferings before me, but I hang upon the will of my God, assured that "the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed." One great answer to prayer I must mention. A gay young lady, whom I knew from a child, it pleased the Lord to afflict. She was deeply awakened, and cried out, "O how I shudder to look back on my past life!" In this state the Lord manifested his mercy, and for some months she went on most sweetly. At her death, after bearing extreme sufferings with a lamb-like patience, she said, "My pain is exceedingly great; but it is not hell; and that I have richly deserved." Soon after she told her aunt, "I have had a great conflict both in soul and body. I am just going." Then she added, "O I am so happy!" and immediately departed.

August 14.—This is always a solemn day. Seven and

twenty years hath my beloved husband been in glory. O what heights of holiness may he have attained! Lord, what have I gained in this long season? I might have attained to much more than I have, but, blessed be the Lord, I do feel an increase; and my spirit pants after the "fulness of God." I find stronger faith; I am filled with blessings! I see the hand of God in all; and such answers to prayer as amaze me! My body is full of infirmities, yet I am able to creep through each day, and to work a little in my Lord's vineyard. Truly my last days are my best.

September 12.—I have this day reached my seventy-third year, and I feel a strong desire that this may be a birthday to my soul. I have such a sense of a full blessing purchased for me, with such a near approach to God, that I long to attain it. I wait at the feet of my dear Saviour for a fuller display of his love.

November 12.—It is thirty-one years this day, since I was united to my dear husband. O blessed union! What cause have I of praise for that providence! It seems but yesterday, and he is as near and dear as ever. I cannot see to write half what I feel in my heart; but I will add, my cup overflows with mercy, glory be to God!

January, 1813.—And now another year is gone, and I see the beginning of a new one. I feel an increase of faith within the last day or two; some refreshing beams of glory now and then have touched my soul. O for a deeper draught!

"From Sion's top the breezes blow,
And cheer us in the vale below."

February 20.—I have read with much pleasure the account of the work of God in India. I praise the Lord for that excellent man, Professor Francke. It was from his college several of the missionaries went to India, and, among others, that great instrument, Mr. Swartz. Glory be to God, who hath raised up these "*angels of the Churches*." Every look at them makes me shrink into nothing. Yet we may be permitted to follow them with our prayers. Lord, increase the number of such men! Bless their endeavours, and fill them with thy Spirit!*

* No doubt many pious persons, as well as Mrs. Fletcher, have thus prayed. How evidently are those prayers answered in the present day!—Ed.

April 20.—Since I wrote last, on March the third, my dear brother William died. We were four in number, and I am now left alone. But I have cause to believe he is in glory. He hath been a kind brother to me; and referring to the extraordinary communication of Mrs. Clapham,* I feel a desire to explain in what a singular manner the whole has been fulfilled. When I married he sent me one hundred pounds as a wedding present. After the death of my dear husband, he came down to me, and with the greatest tenderness and affection brought me forty pounds. Some time after, my uncle Claudius Bosanquet died, and left each of my brothers eighteen thousand pounds, and several of his nephews and nieces five hundred each; but neither my sister nor myself were mentioned. My brother William at that time divided one of his thousands between us. This was a great help, as I had some money still to pay off. Since that time he hath helped me yearly for my poor's expenses,—and, for time, has given me forty pounds a year. At this time of distress, when trade is so low, and the poor so straitened, this loss would have been a great one; but he hath left me two thousand pounds, so that my income, instead of decreasing, will be enlarged. I cannot reflect on this circumstance but with wonder and praise. When Mrs. Clapham told me, about a fortnight before we were married, of these great helps, I declare I did not expect one penny. O how exactly has all come to pass! I remember she said that the last sum that she saw laid down was much larger than any before. How often has my heart cried to the Lord that he would restore him a hundred-fold! I trust it is so. I have a strong confidence his cup is full of glory.

April 30.—I feel the presence of the Saviour, and trust to enter more deeply than ever into him as my centre. Reflecting on my past mercies and present situation, I am struck with amazement at the loving kindness of the Lord. Never was I more comfortable than now! Though I have so many infirmities, yet I have such a measure of health as renders life quite easy. Good nights, sufficient appetite, and a degree of strength, at times quite easy;

* See page 135.

and sweet liberty in the meetings. No burden with my family,—my friend Mary Tooth manages all. My confidence is all in thee, thou mighty Lord of all! I feel thee drawing nearer and nearer to my soul. The wound in my breast, occasioned by the lump which had formed, puts me afresh in mind of eternity. But, O how sweetly dost thou support me under it! I am enabled to go through all my meetings, and have but very little pain. Yesterday that verse of the hymn was sweetly applied to my heart,—

“Abundant sweetness! While I sing
Thy love my ravish’d soul o’erflows;
Secure in thee, my God and King,
Of glory which no period knows.”

September 3.—On the 14th of August I felt deep impressions of that most awful event, the death of my dear husband. But the renewed scene, will, I trust, soon end in joyous days.

January, 1814.—I have been much disturbed almost all night. My asthma was oppressive, and I had much fever. My head also was confused, but those words came powerfully to my mind,—

“Sweet is thy voice, my Spouse, to me,
I will behold no spot in thee:
What mighty wonders love performs,
That puts a comeliness on worms!”

May 7.—For some time the wound in my breast has been better, though it was thought, in January, that I should not live many days; and my breath is now more easy, especially in the night. I leave all in thy dear hand, my adorable Lord, and only long for a deeper plunge into God.

May 20.—Reflecting on past mercies I find abundant cause for praise. I am surrounded with loving kindness; but my strength and sight seem to fail. I am waiting for a closer union with my dear Lord. Though so weak in body, I feel a desire to praise thee, my adorable Lord, for thy abundant mercies. O, my gracious Lord, I do feel great cause of praise! How many have I seen of my near relations who have suffered much in illness through want of wisdom, or tender care, in those about them! But I am favoured above all. O the wonderful care Providence hath ever had over me! What snares he hath saved me from? What dangers preserved me in, and what

promises have I seen fulfilled! I have every thing I can want. O, my God, give me a watchful spirit, that I may not speak one word amiss! Above all, answer that prayer, "Let no vain thoughts lodge within me! Give me, from this hour, a mind continually fixed on thee, never more to be drawn out of its centre!

July 1.—How tenderly the Lord deals with me! I am very weak, and yet am oft five times in a week able to be in my meetings, and I have strength to speak so that all may hear, and the Lord is very present with us. Lord, fill my soul with abundant praise!

Sunday, August 15.—Yesterday, the 14th, was a solemn day to me. It is now twenty-nine years since my beloved went to glory. I am led to cry for a closer union with my Saviour. I feel his Spirit working in me; but it is a season of trial. That word is much with me, *Pray without ceasing.*

22.—Yesterday I had encouragement from the Lord, and lay down in his presence. In the night, while asleep, those words came with power, my heart seemed to speak them,—

"Him eye to eye I soon shall see,
My face like his shall shine!
O, what a glorious company,
Where saints and angels join!"

I see more and more what a fulness there is in the Saviour. O, my God, let me be wholly lost in thee!

September 12.—Seventy-five years ago I was born. O, my gracious Saviour, what great grace might I have gained in seventy-five years! I turn me to that blood which makes the sinner whole. I have, of late, had a view now and then as if the door of holiness was open, and the word spoke in my heart, "Believe, and possess to the uttermost." Lord give the power!

November 3.—On Saturday I was very ill, and thought death drew near. Since that time I have found a deeper work in my soul. The Lord seems to lay to his hand. O, my Jesus, fill me with thy Spirit! I long to be all thine own.

24.—The Lord is very good to me. I have found a clearer sense of his presence, and much answer to prayer. O, I feel as clay before the potter. On the 12th of this

month I had a clear remembrance of the solemn scene of the union with my precious husband, and felt it was for eternity. What a favour do I also possess in my friend Tooth ! The Lord has made her every thing to me that I need. Dear Mrs. Gilpin's death seems to bring me nearer to eternity. How little did I think she would be called first ! Lord, prepare me, and fill me with thyself ! I am still able to be out twice on Sunday, though the cold weather has much effect on my breath ; yet last night and to-day I am a good deal relieved.

December 12.—I have had severe pain for a fortnight, yet mixed with much mercy. I thought I was near death. Yesterday I had an uncommon sense of the presence of God, and those words were much with me, "My peace I leave with thee ;" and again,—*"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."* I felt it good to look into eternity, though in much pain.

Monday, January 2, 1815.—The Sabbath yesterday was precious to me. O, I long that the year fifteen may be the best of all my life. Should I live a part of it, may that part bring heaven into my soul. Those words have been sweet to me, *"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely."* Looking back on my past life, and seeing so many blunders, I felt a weight when the words above were spoken to my heart. Yes, my precious Saviour, thou dost *love me freely*. O, that I were more filled with thy love ! The wound in my breast is much less, and I am much better ; and blessed be my God ! I feel nearer to him than last year. O, for a fuller gale from Sion's hill !

March 21.—I have had pain last night, but not so violent as it might have been. Toward morning, I got some sleep, and awoke with these words, which came with power,—

"Give to the winds thy fears,
Hope, and be undismay'd ;
God hears thy cries, and counts thy tears,
He shall lift up thy head."

May 29.—Glory be to God, I am full of mercies ! I long for a more full union. I am far better in body also than I could have thought ; yet I see myself on the very

verge of eternity, and long for a full and perfect oneness with my Saviour. I know he doth bless me, and I cast my whole soul, with every power, on my Lord. O, it is sweet to have my will fully sunk in the will of my God.

August 3.—I have had some trials with regard to outward affairs: but I have a full confidence all shall end well. We have had for thirty years a oneness among our people; but now there is a division, by the desire of the minister. It hurts me; yet I believe the Lord will order all. But I here declare, I have been joined to the people united to Mr. Wesley for above threescore years, and I trust to die among them. The life of true religion is with them, and the work increases. If my papers fall into any hands, I entreat these lines may never be left out.* I have always considered myself as a member of

* I should have greatly rejoiced if I had been left at the same liberty respecting this painful passage, as the other parts of Mrs. Fletcher's writings. But her mind seems to have been deeply impressed with the occurrence, and hence the injunction is absolute. Being thus obliged to insert the change which was at this time made in the parish of Madeley, (by the curate not choosing to act among the people as his predecessors had done,) a duty seems to lie upon me to elucidate the cause of it in the best manner I am able: and this I hope to do with all the tenderness that truth will allow. Two letters, written by Mrs. Fletcher to the gentleman who succeeded Mr. Horne as curate of Madeley, will, I think, sufficiently explain it.

“Madeley, March 26, 1792.

“REV. SIR,—Your letter to Mr. H. was not seen by me till yesterday, or I should have answered it before.

“In order to draw what I have to say into the compass of one sheet of paper, I will divide it into three heads. First, The reason why I address you instead of the vicar;—Secondly, The temporal affairs of the parish;—and, Thirdly, The state of the people as to religion.

“First, I must observe, that after the death of my dear husband, (whose unwearied labours, and unexampled meekness, had left on the minds of the people the keenest conviction of their loss,) the mantle seemed to fall on a young gentleman, named Horne, (at that time one of the preachers on the circuit,) whom my dear husband had before mentioned as the man he wished to be his successor. There were great difficulties in the way; he, however, did take his place, and continued with us between five and six years. But *the Lord, who holds the stars in his right hand*, saw good to call him to Africa. The departure of Mr. and Mrs. Horne was a great loss to me, because in every thing we acted mutually. The orphans of my beloved partner were dear to me, and I to them; and Mr. Horne considered them as consigned to his care by a man whom he esteemed above all others. But the Lord has

the Church, and so have the united friends in Madeley In some measure we are now pushed out. O, let not one word of this be left out. What I mean by being pushed out is, the Church minister has repeatedly expressed a

been pleased to part us; and, as we love his will, we cheerfully say, Let it in all things be done. When he left us, Mr. Burton, the vicar, a mild, sweet-tempered man, desired the religious part of the parish to please themselves in the choice of a curate. When I informed him the other day, that after having sought after several, we had been disappointed; he replied, 'I am sorry for it. I had rather that Mrs. Fletcher would choose one, (though I have many applications,) for she knows the mind of the parish better than I do; and whoever she recommends I will accept.' On that account it is, sir, that I am the person to address you. Secondly, As to the temporal affairs,—Our church is far too small for the inhabitants; and yet so awkwardly built, that it requires a very good voice to be heard in it. It is, however, proposed to erect a larger about a mile off, as this is near falling down. That will be more in the centre of the parish, and more commodious. As to the third head,—Those who are religious in the parish, as well as those who attend from more distant places, are a simple quiet people, all of one mind. They know nothing of dispute, nor think of any jarring doctrine. The dovelike spirit of my precious husband rests much on his flock, and they receive, as from heaven, every messenger who comes unto them. As to the service or duty required—you may do what you will here. Every thing good goes down at Madeley, if it has but unction. My dear husband, and Mr. Horne, used to go through the whole service at church morning and afternoon, and then preach at the Dale, or the Wood, the two other ends of the parish, at night. By that means they saw many who did not come to the church; and at church there are many who never hear elsewhere.

"I think I have now given you as full an answer as I am able; but I must beg an immediate reply, as there are several curates waiting for theirs—and we are quite unsettled. And please to be clear in your answer when you can come. I should rejoice to see a Gospel ministry fixed here before my death.

"That the Lord may direct you with clear light, and give both you and your partner to discern your way before you, is the prayer of,

"Rev. sir, your friend and servant,

"M. FLETCHER."

It appears that soon after this gentleman came to the parish, he became uneasy about his situation. Having expressed his dissatisfaction to Mrs. Fletcher, she wrote to him the following letter:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Since our conversation the other morning, some thoughts have arisen in my mind which I believe will not be unacceptable to you. You will not reject a word of advice, even from an inferior.

wish that the Methodists should be a separate people ; as he always thought it best for the Church people, and the people called Methodists, to move in distinct lines.

August 6.—Blessed be the Lord, the work goes on, and

“I am persuaded you will clear me from the idea of having deceived you in any thing. I told you, on your first visit to my house, we were joined to that body of people called Methodists, and asked, Are you willing to labour among a company of Methodists ? To which you answered in the affirmative. This gave me a convincing proof it was not your own, but God’s honour you were seeking. This also engaged the hearts of the serious part of the parish toward you, and caused them to receive you with open arms, as one who would walk in the steps of your worthy predecessor. Now I would observe, should such a thought be suggested, that it would be better for them to leave that connection, (under which several have been called,) and consider themselves as only belonging to you ; if, I say, such a proposal was to be made, might it not be the means of sowing the first seeds of division ever known in Madeley ? This, I am sure, would be very painful to you. I do not believe you meant to do so ; but I lay these thoughts before you as an antidote to such a temptation, should it ever arise.

“Should that people, among whom, at present, the Lord so eminently works—should they decline from the pure worship of God—in that case, the parish would naturally cleave to you. But while the Lord does carry on his work among them, let us be found with God and his people ; ‘Yea, let us meet them with bread and with water in the way.’

“Some years ago, a gentleman whom I well knew and loved, settled in a parish a few miles from where I lived. I believe there were about a hundred Methodists in the place. They were delighted with him, and all went on well, till he proposed to dissolve the society, and have only one of his own. The people in general consented ; he applied to Mr. Wesley, and the preachers were withdrawn. But, dear man, though he was an upright soul, he had not as good gifts for discipline as for preaching—he found much trouble and confusion arose. The people began to scatter. Another living then presented itself, which he accepted, to the great offence of those who had left their first path to follow him. After this, they who had been Methodists wrote to Mr. Wesley, and got the preachers again ; and, in a few years after, there were twelve hundred members in that society.

“I acknowledge, dear sir, there may be some humiliation in thus acting in concert with others. But is not humiliation the only way to exaltation ? Do we ever rise in the Divine life but in proportion as we sink ? If the prophets of the Lord *were sawn asunder, were stoned ; if they wandered about in dens and caves of the earth—*shall we start at a few trials which may, in a small degree, lay our honour in the dust, when the honour of our heavenly Father is advanced thereby ? I say again, should the Methodists decline, (which God forbid,) they would soon cast us off if we did not decline with them.

I feel very thankful that the Lord has answered prayer in the appointment of our preachers. I do feel the Lord orders all.

August 14.—Thirty years, this day, I drank the bitter cup, and closed the eyes of my beloved husband; and now I am myself in a dying state. Lord, prepare me! I feel death very near. My soul doth wait, and long to fly to the bosom of my God! Come, my adorable Saviour! I

“When the people of this place have had, by some years’ experience, a full proof of your holy and close walk with God, the purity of your doctrine, and the unchangeableness of your affection, that you *have them in your heart to live and die with them*; they will then cleave to you with an undivided love, discerning that the Lord has said unto you, Behold your children: and in their hearts, *Behold your father*. A great step toward this has already been taken on *our* side: but as yet your mind has been far less settled than ours; and perhaps should we meet you with Jehu’s salutation to Jehonadab, you could not freely give us your hand. But this does not discourage me. I impute it to the opposition of Satan, who sees you are in your right place, and in your right order—as a stone *now* let into that very part of the building where God designs you to be; and he would fain disorder the whole by throwing you out, either through discouragement or by any other way.

“Permit me to add, I am more and more convinced that you are the gift of God to us—to me in particular, an answer to my own prayer. I daily feel an encouraging union with both yourself and Mrs. Walter. I often boast to the preachers of the sweetness of your spirit, and the union of your heart in the work. O, let not my boasting be ever vain; but when I close my eyes in Madeley, let me have the satisfaction to behold from the upper world that the dovelike spirit which so eminently reigned in my dear husband has dropped, as his mantle, upon you, and that it shines forth as a double portion.

“Having an hour at command, I have freely opened my heart to you. Receive it as, perhaps, the dying advice of one who earnestly prays you may be filled with all the fulness of God.”*

The result of this most affectionate and pious epistle, was, that Mr. W. was fully delivered from his uneasiness, and for twenty-one years laboured, in the most affectionate and faithful manner, for the good of the parish, and in every part of it to the great edification of the people. His excellent partner, who was closely connected with, and very dear to Mrs. Fletcher, died at Madeley, in the full triumph of faith. See page 291.

I am happy to add that the people who were thus obliged to become a *distinct* body, have not *separated* from the Church, but still attend the public service there.—Ed.

* This letter, which is in Mrs. Fletcher’s own hand, has neither date nor signature, but it was evidently written not long after the former.—Ed.

lie at thy feet ; I long for all thy fulness ! Bless my dear and faithful friend. Keep her secure ; I long for the day when we shall all meet above !

September 12.—This day I am seventy-six years old, and the same day my dear husband would have been eighty-six. Surely we shall remember the scenes we have had together. But, O my God, give me power to cleave to thee every moment ! I feel the powers of darkness are vehemently striving to distract and hinder me. O my God and Father, enable me to walk in thy constant presence ! O Jesus, Jesus ! fill me with thy love, pour out thy Spirit abundantly upon me, and make my heart thy constant home !

September 27.—I am filled with mercies ; but I want to be filled with holiness. O show thy lovely face ! Draw me more close to thyself ! I long, I wait for a closer union. It is amazing under how many complaints I still live ! But they are held by the hand of the Lord. On the Monday evenings I have had some power to read and speak at the room till the nights grow dark ; but on Sunday noon I have yet liberty, though my eyes are so bad and sore. The Lord helps me wonderfully. In the class also, in the morning, the Lord doth help. O for entire holiness !

October 26.—I have had a bad night ; but asking help of the Lord for closer communion, my precious Lord applied that word, *I have borne thy sins in my own body on the tree*. I felt his presence. I seem very near death ; but I long to fly into the arms of my beloved Lord. I feel his loving kindness surrounds me.

Mrs. Fletcher's journal ends here. I believe she wrote no more. She died on the ninth day of the December following. The particulars of her last illness, and of her departure, are supplied by Miss Tooth. I extract them from the short account which she published soon after the death of her venerable friend.

For the last month of Mrs. Fletcher's life, her breath was more oppressed than usual ; it had been much affected for some years upon motion : yet when she sat still, or laid herself down at night, she could breathe quite easy. But in the middle of November, her breathing was affected, both while she sat still, and when she was laid down. She had also a very troublesome cough. By these

her sufferings were great. She had had a wound for the last six years on the side of her left breast, which she had been told was a cancer: but her sufferings were not compared with what she had to endure in her last illness. Yet she would not be comforted by the thought of her sufferings. - It is like as if I were to say, "I will speak of my sufferings, but I will speak of my sufferings." -

When her sufferings were great, she said, "I am not in the world of the flesh." - The sufferings of the body are not compared with the glory of the life to come. In the month of November she wrote to her friends in these words, "Call me in the name of the Lord: as will I hear thee, and I will come to thee. These words she frequently repeated to her friends who were near her. - Yes, my Lord, I will call on thee, and thou shalt hear me." -

At the time she was still retaining energy, "They shall not be able to overcome me." She said to her friends, "I am not in the world of the flesh, but I am in the world of the spirit." - She said to her friends, "I am not in the world of the flesh, but I am in the world of the spirit." - She said to her friends, "I am not in the world of the flesh, but I am in the world of the spirit." - She said to her friends, "I am not in the world of the flesh, but I am in the world of the spirit." -

"I am not in the world of the flesh, but I am in the world of the spirit." -

These words she often repeated with great fervor.

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All this day she had a great degree of fever upon her, yet she would sometimes say to me, "What were the sweet words the Lord gave me last night?" As soon as I pronounced the first word, she would go on with the rest, and add, "I feel the power of them, though my head is so confused with this fever, that I could not immediately recollect them."

On the 6th of December, while looking on me with the tenderest affection, she said, "My faithful friend, my dearest friend; ten thousand blessings on her head." She continued also to cry to God for a blessing upon several persons whom she mentioned; and upon all her relations: though they were so far from her in body, they were to the last interested in her prayers; and she would frequently plead with the Lord, that one day she might meet them all in glory. From the beginning of December, she dozed much, whenever the cough and the oppression upon her breath would allow her any ease. This she often complained of, saying, "I lose my time; I want every moment to be spent in prayer or praise."

On the same day, when waking out of a doze, she said, "I am drawing near to glory;" and, soon after, "There is my house and portion fair;" and again, "Jesus, come, my hope of glory:" and, after a short pause, "He lifts his hands and shows that I am graven there." The two following days were indeed days of love and praise. Mrs. Perks and others visited her, upon whom she prayed the choicest blessings might descend.

The day following, the 8th, her breathing was exceedingly difficult. In the morning she had walked into the other room, as usual, with only the help of my arm. In the middle of the day she wished to go into the chamber again, and I led her, as at other times; but she was now weaker, and I could scarcely keep her from falling. I therefore asked her to sit down in a chair, which she did, and I wheeled her back again: with this she was much pleased, and said the exercise had done her good. All the afternoon she was extremely ill, either hot to a great degree, shivering with cold, or very drowsy; but through all, her mouth was full of the loving kindness of the Lord.

At night she said she would not go to bed till after ten o'clock. We prayed together before we went into the

chamber ; but her breath being so greatly oppressed, she prayed but a short time. She then said, " Call upon the Lord." When I concluded she said it was a very comfortable time ; and having heard in the afternoon, that Dr. Yonge (who had always shown her the greatest attention) was ill, she prayed particularly for him.

When we were ready to go into the chamber, after ten o'clock, I got her into the chair, but she was now weaker than at noon. However, I wheeled her to the bedside, and could not but look upon her as dying ; and indeed so she considered herself, for when in bed she said, " My love, this is the last time I shall get into bed ; it has been hard work to get in, but it is work I shall do no more. This oppression upon my breath cannot last long ; but all is well. The Lord will shower down ten thousand blessings upon thee, my tender nurse, my kind friend."

After these and many more kind expressions to the same effect, she desired I would make haste to bed. I entreated her to let me sit up, repeatedly saying, " Do let me watch with you this one night ;" but with all the tenderness imaginable, yet with that degree of firmness which made me unwilling to urge the request farther, she said, " Go to bed ; you have done all for me you can do. You know you can be with me in a moment if I want you ; but if you sit up it will make me uncomfortable. I cannot rest without you go to bed." After I had made all the excuses I could for remaining up, and looking upon her dear countenance as long as her kind concern for me would admit, she again urged my going to bed ; and I therefore laid me within the bedclothes, without undressing. She then asked, " Are you in bed, my love ?" I answered, " Yes." She then said, " That's right,—now if I can rest, I will ; but let our hearts be united in prayer, and the Lord bless both thee and me !"

These were the last words her beloved lips uttered ; for some time after this, about one o'clock in the morning of December 9th, the noise her breath had so long made, ceased. I thought, Is she dropped asleep ? It immediately came to my mind, " Asleep in Jesus ! See, a soul escaped to bliss." I went directly to her bedside, where I found the beloved body without the immortal spirit, which had entered the realms of endless day. My feel-

ings are not to be described ; I clung to the casket of the saint. I knelt down by the side of it, and cried to Him who had just now called home the Spirit of my friend, that some portion of her Spirit might rest on me. At length I thought I should injure her dear remains, if I did not call the family up. I therefore went and called my sister and the servant, at half past one ; after which I sent for Mrs. Perks, who kindly came over immediately. I never left the chamber, while any thing could be done for her : I had promised to be with her to the last, and the Lord enabled me so to do.

Her countenance was as sweet a one as was ever seen in death. There was at the last neither sigh, groan, or struggle ; and she had all the appearance of a person in the most composed slumber. When I first undrew the curtain, and saw her dear head dropped off the pillow, and looking so sweetly composed, I could not persuade myself the spirit was fled, till I took her in my arms, and found no motion left. I then perceived the moment she had so much longed for had arrived,—the happy moment when she should gain the blissful shore, and

“ See the Lamb in glory stand,
Encircled with his radiant band,
And join th’ angelic powers.”

“ All that height of glorious bliss
Her everlasting portion is,—
And all that heaven is ours.”

A REVIEW OF HER CHARACTER

It is generally expected that the memoirs of eminent persons should be accompanied with a view of their character, comprehending the several particulars wherein they differed from the generality of mankind, and so became conspicuous. This may be, in general, edifying, and certainly is not a difficult task; but it seems to me not so easy when the life of a real Christian (one who was truly such on the Scripture model) is given to the world. We do not find that the inspired writers ever take that way, although they had the greatest characters on earth to delineate—even those of whom *the world was not worthy*. Mr. Wesley took high ground when at Oxford, (as he informs us;) he “determined to devote his whole life to God.” Hence *the world knew him not*, because *they knew not Him whom he served*. His own works, especially *the daily account of that whole life, thus devoted*, and which is contained in his Journals, can alone describe the man; and if warranted by holy Scripture, can alone show if indeed he kept that ground. Men may bring their line and plummet, and take the gauge of excellence, or the contrary, as they may be disposed; but the principle of action lies beyond their ken. “He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.”

The same may be said of Mrs. Fletcher. If she were only an eminent person, and even eminent in the Church, it would be an easy task to display her character in the several points of view in which human attainments may be exhibited, so as to excite admiration, and stimulate the readers to an imitation of her various excellences. But I find an awe upon my mind in contemplating the task which may thus be supposed to have fallen upon me; and I recur to what was said in the preface—the Life of Mrs. Fletcher will not be considered as a common biography, but as an account of *a work of the Spirit of God*. That she greatly differed from the generality even of those who have been favoured, like her, with eminent talents, and

rich gifts of Providence, will not be denied by the most cursory reader of these memoirs. But "who made her to differ? And what had she which she had not received?" These questions we know were so received by her as to annihilate *all glorying in the flesh*. How deeply she felt all this glory swallowed up in shame, need not *now* be set forth by me. She came to *the throne of grace*, not with the humility of *a creature*, (which the holy angels well understand, and deeply feel,) but with the humility of *a sinner*, pleading only, the only true plea,

"Dust and ashes is my name,
My all is sin and misery;
Friend of sinners, spotless Lamb,
Thy blood was shed for me!"

The pious reader has not read these memoirs in vain. There is no danger that such a one will fall into the mistake of Agrippa, who, while he contemplated the great character of St. Paul shining through his chains, forgot *who* and *where* he was, and cried out, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!" Nor will he need the gentle but firm correction which the loving apostle gave to that prince: "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds:" thus intimating that, as "no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost," so no man can be a Christian, but by being *created anew in Christ Jesus*.*

Before honour is humility. The humility that belongs to man *as a sinner* we have already noted. It has in it the sentence of death. A heart-felt acknowledgment that it is just this sentence should take place, and that *in us dwelleth no good thing*, is that humility which is alone founded in truth. Blessed are they who are thus "poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" even "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." These "unsearchable riches of Christ" are made theirs by the "Holy Ghost, who glorifies the Saviour." Mrs. Fletcher's heart was thus, like Lydia's, opened, and "filled with peace and joy in believing." And she never lost the

* See Mr. Wesley's admirable note on the passage, Acts xvi, 20.

heavenly blessing. She kept her poverty, and she retained her kingdom.

Like her admirable husband, Mrs. Fletcher did not rest satisfied with being "plucked as a brand from the burning: she had not so learned Christ. Leaving therefore the principles of the doctrine of Christ, she went on unto perfection." Her eyes seemed ever fixed on "the robe washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. The work of the Holy Ghost, sanctifying the believer, body, soul, and spirit," she knew was as necessary to *eternal salvation* as the work of the Saviour upon the cross. The Lord put that cry into her heart,

"Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Be to me what Adam lost."

Nor did she forget that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," that is become the privilege of believers, in consequence of God the Son, and not Adam, being now the head of the human race. "Beholding with unveiled face this glory of the Lord," in the salvation of guilty and sinful man,

"Her soul broke out in strong desire,
The perfect bliss to prove:
Her longing heart was all on fire,
To be renew'd in love."

A good judge of religion, as exhibited in the gracious recovery of fallen man,* being, many years ago, asked his opinion of the vicar of Madeley, replied, "*There is no occasion of stumbling in him.* Set down any of the Scriptural marks of a Christian, or a true Christian minister, and I will engage he will not be found deficient." We know there are strong portraits in the *sacred Word*, drawn by the pencil of truth, of those who "added to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity;" and I believe the pious reader of her Life will not be disposed to doubt that *these things were* evidently in *Mrs. Fletcher also, and that they abounded;*

* The Rev. John Owen, some time Mr. Fletcher's curate, a gentleman afterward well known and highly respected in India and in England.

making her neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

No man could better detect the deceitfulness of the human heart, even in those who are religiously disposed, than her admirable husband has done; especially when treating his favourite subject, (the subject also of his Divine Master in his sermon on the mount,) Christian Perfection. Addressing those whom he calls "Perfect Christian Pharisees," he observes, "Ye are most ready to profess Christian perfection, though, alas! ye stand at the utmost distance from perfect *humility*, the grace most essential to the Christian character. You have professedly entered into the fold where Christ's sheep, who are perfected in love, rest all at each other's feet, and at the feet of the Lamb of God. But how have you entered? Not by "Christ the door," for Christ is "meekness and lowliness" manifested in the flesh; but ye are still ungente, and fond of praise. Your proud minds are above stooping low to follow Him who "made himself of no reputation," that he might raise us to heavenly honours; and who, to pour just contempt on human pride, had his first night's lodging in a stable, and spent his last night partly on the cold ground in an agony, and partly in an ignominious confinement, exposed to the greatest indignities. He rested his infant head upon hay, his dying head upon thorns. A manger was his cradle, and a cross his deathbed. Thirty years he travelled from the sordid stable to the accursed tree. Shepherds were his first attendants, and malefactors his last companions.

"Now, far from practising with godly sincerity either his first lesson, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' or those which he afterward inculcated, ye abhor penitential poverty. Your humility is not cordial. You are humble in looks, in gestures, in voice, in dress, in behaviour, from motives of pharisaic ambition. But ye continue strangers to the unaffected simplicity and lowliness of Christ's perfect disciples. Ye choose the lowest place, but ye do not *love* it. If you cheerfully take it, it is not among your equals, but your *inferiors*: and because you hope that men will say to you, 'Come up higher.' Ye still aim at some wrong mark. Ye have a narrow, contracted spirit. Ye do not gladly sacrifice your private satisfaction, your in-

terest, your reputation, your prejudices, to the general interest of *truth and love*, and to the public good of the whole body of Christ."

Let Mrs. Fletcher be proved by these high principles. How often, how continually, do we find her, in these memoirs, trying herself by, and aiming to walk according to them! How constantly did she struggle against the root of all this corruption! How perseveringly did she eye the footsteps of her Divine Master, making it the one desire of her whole life, "to be conformed to the image of the Son of God!"

Many who have aimed at *living unto God*, according to the full *spiritual* rule of the Gospel, have been sometimes charged with neglecting, or lightly esteeming, the Divine atonement. This is certainly true of several eminent persons, who have, in this way of defective faith, professed to "follow on to know the Lord." Very celebrated names, and in whom was found much of the Christian character, have thus "gone about to establish their own righteousness;" and in a way so refined that they seemed to defy detection. But have they not "laboured in vain, and spent their strength for naught?" Has not a *spirit of bondage* been manifest in their approaches to God, and in their religious communion with men? True repose and liberty of spirit, while contending against sin, can only be found in "the blood of the covenant." If our abode be not the *horrible pit* of guilt and corruption, shall we not walk in the *miry clay* of doubt and fear, if we thus forsake "the strong rock?" I trust the pious reader has seen that Mrs. Fletcher never forsook it; never gave place to this refined temptation. As she "magnified the law and made it honourable," as the rule of life; so she magnified that perfect and infinitely meritorious "sacrifice offered to God, through the eternal Spirit." It was her all in all, whether as "a babe in Christ," holding him with a trembling hand, or as "a mother in Israel," established, strengthened, and settled. The language of her heart was, throughout her whole course, Every moment, Lord, I want the merit of thy death.

Of her ordinary walk, the most competent witness now alive has, in the fulness of her heart, given us some striking particulars. Speaking of her domestic life, Miss Tooth

observes, "She was one of a thousand, as of mercy so of economy; always sparing of expense upon herself, that she might have the more to give to *the household of faith*." She would often say, "God's receivers upon earth are Christ's Church and his poor." When I have proposed the purchase of some article of clothing for her, she would ask, "Is it quite necessary? If not, do not buy; it will be much better to give the money to some of our poor neighbours than to lay it out upon me." Nor was this once only; it was invariably her conduct, and with great truth it might be constantly said of her also, that

"What her charity impairs,
She saves by prudence in affairs!"

"She was always remarkably exact in setting down every penny she expended. She kept four different accounts, in which all she spent was included. These four were the house, sundries, clothes, and poor. We have often, at the end of the year, been astonished to find the house expenses so small, considering how many had shared with us. At such times she has said, 'It is the Lord who has blessed our bread and water.' I have in former years taken up the book in which she kept her accounts, and wept over it, with the consideration that I should one day probably have to settle it alone; and now I drink of the bitter cup. A few days ago I entered upon the work; and I think it right, as a confirmation of what I have before advanced, to state the difference between the expenses of her clothes, and what she dispensed to the poor. On making up the account of her apparel, I found the whole year's expenditure amounted to nineteen shillings and sixpence; this was every penny that had been laid out on her own person for the whole year. The expense was not always so small, but I believe it *never* amounted to five pounds.

"I then made up the poor's account, and found the amount to be £181 16s. 1d. Thus liberally had she dispensed abroad. But her desire of communicating comfort to the afflicted was very extensive: I do not think she ever heard of a person in distress, but, if in her power to do it, she by some means contrived to send relief. To comfort the distressed was always a real comfort to her. With regard to this world's wealth, it was no more to her

than the dust on the balance. She has often said, and I am sure with great truth, 'Gold is no more to me than dust; the gold of Ophir than the stones of the brook.' At another time she would say, 'It is not so important what we have, as how we use it.'

"Her love to every one was so abundant that she was unwilling to find a fault in any. She was ever desirous of casting the mantle of love over the failings of others, if the truth would admit of it. And while her kindness was thus extensively manifested to all with whom she had any intercourse, her gratitude to others who showed marks of love to her was no less. When her kind friends sent her any thing they thought would be acceptable, it was her study to think how she could return them an equal token of love; and if nothing was brought to her mind to do for them at the time, she would say, 'Well, if I can do no more, I can pray for them.' I never knew her sit down to partake of any thing that was the gift of a friend, without first praying for the donor.

"And while her gratitude to the creature was thus evidently discerned, her praise and thanksgiving to the Creator was abundant. Indeed she lived in the spirit of praise, frequently saying, 'What blessings has the Lord bestowed upon me! How comfortable has he made me in my old age! Though I am left here, and my dearly beloved husband and my Sally in glory, yet I know no lack. And such a loving people! I may well say, *I dwell among my own people.*'"

To this *loving faith she added courage.* This is very conspicuous in her whole life. *The righteous,* says Solomon, *is bold as a lion.* This quality, it is well known, was possessed in a very high degree by her admirable husband. He was *valiant for the truth, and a terror to evil doers.* Mrs. Fletcher was not less so, allowing for the difference of her sex. As a fruit of this Christian courage, a noble ingenuousness was found in them both. Mr. Fletcher's striking and bold discourse against popery, (which had lamentably imbued his parish before his induction,) when, after some years, it again reared its head, is well known to the readers of *his Life.* Mrs. Fletcher had this enemy to encounter also, but in a milder shape. We joyfully allow that popery has had (and we doubt not still has) its

true saints. It must be so while it continues sound in the doctrine of the Trinity, and the atonement. Those in that Church *who are led by the Spirit of God* will thus find some portions of *the bread of life* amid the mountains of chaff which satisfy earthly minds, and operate as poison on those who love to be deceived. It could not be but that the Romish minister of Madeley should strive to gain a convert like Mrs. Fletcher. He presented many books to her, which were accompanied with long letters, and thus, with every appearance of the most friendly regard, he strove to turn her from what he believed to be the error of her ways. But though her earthly head and shield had been withdrawn, the zealous pastor found he had not a flighty, uninformed, or unstable Christian to deal with. Her short answers, (short when compared with the letters which she had received,) fully exhibiting the Christian spirit, may be found in the Appendix, No. 1.

If we look at what may be called her public life—a long life, filled with *the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love*—we cannot but observe how carefully she attended to that sacred warning, given to all who are called to the arduous duty of *saving souls from death: They made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept.* We have seen how great, how constant, how persevering, even to the close of life, were her loving exertions; but did they ever prevent, or weaken, in her mind, the great duty of *self-examination*? No: her eye seemed fixed on the apostle's words, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

I am sensible that I here tread on tender ground. The question of the lawfulness, or even of the expediency of female preaching, will recur to every sensible and pious reader; especially as Mrs. Fletcher lived and died a member of the Church of England, and of the Methodist society, neither of which sanctions a female ministry. But I cannot but think that much that has been said on this question, especially since the days of George Fox, (when the ministry of females received a regular establishment in his community,) may be spared on this occasion. Mrs.

Fletcher has already spoken on this subject, (page 116,) and every candid reader has, I believe, felt the modesty and simplicity of that short statement. In truth, her preaching was but an enlargement of her daily and hourly conversation. Her family, her visitors, might be said to be her constant congregation. And as she never, in her more public efforts, meddled with the government of the Church, *usurped authority over the man*, or made any display of a regular or authoritative commission, but merely strove to "win souls, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God;"—while she was herself *the least and the servant of all*;—may not every pious Churchman and Methodist unite, and say, *Would to God that all the Lord's people were such prophets and prophetesses?*

Mr. Wesley, who never sanctioned a regular ministry of that kind, permitted, and it may be said encouraged, her Christian efforts in that way. Her conflicts were very great concerning her call in that respect; and the taunts which she had to endure from men were very painful. These she at length embodied in a letter to Mr. Wesley, declaring her willingness to abide by his decision; and that she would gladly resist this impression, if the Lord should so direct her by him. Mr. Wesley, who well knew her *simplicity, godly sincerity*, and admirable understanding, replied, "That he considered it to be an extraordinary call: that he also looked upon the whole work of God, termed Methodism, to be an extraordinary dispensation. Therefore," says he, "I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was, not to permit a woman to speak in the congregation; yet in extraordinary cases he made a few exceptions." Mrs. Fletcher thanked God for this answer, and continued her labours of love to the close of her life.

As I think it probable that those readers whom I am most disposed to gratify, may indulge a wish that some specimen of her expounding on those occasions, were recorded, I am happy that I can meet those wishes. They will find, in the Appendix, No. 2, some thoughts left by her, which may give some idea of her manner of teaching.

Behold her then sitting modestly in the corner of her large room, with the crowded assembly (among whom were not unfrequently some ministers of eminent piety and learning) hanging on her lips ! It has been said that she was rather too fond of spiritualizing ; I am therefore not sorry that the discourse which I am thus enabled to give is of that kind. I think the sensible reader will not pronounce that there is any thing to blame in this specimen ; but will rather think that the subject is soberly treated, and with a due restraint on the imagination. It is, however, only the outline ; the enlargement, the colouring, the unction, the life, are not there. These are gone ! The place of this evangelical prophetess knows her no more ! But she lives, and her name is *as ointment poured forth*. She *rests from her labours, and her works do follow her*. She sees them not ; she sees only *the Lamb of God !* But he sees them all : *not one of them is forgotten before God*. They will appear to assembled worlds in that day when *the books shall be opened ; and being wrought in God, they shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory*.

APPENDIX NO. I.

“REV. SIR,—As there is no act of friendship greater than to care for the immortal soul, I consider myself as truly indebted to you for the kind concern you have expressed for mine. I have read your letter, and also the two books you were so kind as to send me ; but bear with me, sir, if I say, I *cannot* be of your mind, viz., ‘That no one can be saved out of the Church of Rome, if they have opportunity of being instructed by it.’ I consider myself as a weak and unworthy member of the *true Church*, which I believe to be the whole body of true believers scattered over all the earth ; who, having experienced (or who are earnestly seeking so to do) the new birth mentioned by our Lord in the third chapter of St. John’s gospel, feel that *they who are in Christ are new creatures* ; and who rely on the Lord Jesus, our great atonement, *alone*, for pardon and acceptance ; though also conscious that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*. Now these sincere followers of the Saviour I consider as the *true Church*, whether in England, Rome, or any other part of the world. I acknowledge the word Protestant was not used till Luther’s time ; but the truths we contend for, I date from the time of our Lord and his apostles. I believe that, after a certain season, *the falling away*, foretold by St. Paul, 2 Thessalonians, chap. ii, verse 3, took place, and a flood of error overspread almost all the Christian world ; only a little branch remaining in small companies, against whom *the gates of hell did not prevail*, though oppressed on all sides, till the Lord found *a hiding place for the woman in the wilderness*, at that time which we call the Reformation.

“If the authority of the Church really springs from St. Peter, I apprehend it remained with those faithful souls who abode in their primitive simplicity when the rest were carried away. But permit me to say, I lay no more stress on St. Peter, than I do on the other apostles ; for it is plain our Lord gave afterward the same authority

to them all; and it is certain St. Paul did not acknowledge that St. Peter had any pre-eminence over the rest, for he claimed an equality with all the apostles, Gal. i, 15-17, and upon one occasion 'withstood St. Peter to the face,' Gal. ii, 11. With regard to the doctrine of Calvin, which represents the God of love in a very wrong light, I therein agree with you, and mourn that so many good men do hold it. Had not Christ died for *all*, the apostles could not have been commanded 'to preach the Gospel to every creature.' However, I believe we must all receive the Saviour in a double sense, as *given for us*, and as *living in us*; that we are entirely *forgiven for his sake*, and must also have a change into his nature, as he himself said in the mission which he gave to St. Paul, Acts xxvi, 17, 18, 'That they may be brought from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me.'

"O, sir, may this loving, faith-producing holiness be found in you and me! For if we are not one with Christ, as 'the branch is with the vine,' continually drawing life from him, we cannot be saved, whatever Church we belong to. I thank you for telling me you will remember me before the throne; give me leave to say, I feel myself led to do the same for you: and if we are both found on the right foundation, and meet in glory, how sweetly shall we forget the name of Romanist and Protestant, and, in one voice, unite in perpetual 'hallelujahs to God and the Lamb for ever!'

"I am, Rev. sir, your obliged servant,

"MARY FLETCHER."

"REV. SIR,—All you say of the importance of the soul and eternal things, I most heartily agree with you in, and sincerely desire to turn my back on earth, and choose Jesus as my only portion. But, O sir, bear with me when I say I cannot be of your mind, nor receive your Church as truly Catholic. You say, 'She is *one*, whereas we are divided into many.' Alas! how can she appear otherwise, when no member dares to speak his mind for fear

of an inquisition? If all hearts were known, how many opinions would be found among you? But even this *appearance* was not *always*, for at times you have had more popes than one, and each had his own party. There were then divisions and disorders. I do not say this by way of reproach. No; in every Church there are tares as well as wheat: only I mean, you are not free from division any more than we are, although force renders it more concealed.

"Again, I cannot but greatly object to your doctrine of indulgence. Perhaps you will say that it is now given up, as the council of Trent disapproved of it. But why given up? If only because of the offence, then you still hold the same opinion. Alas! how hurtful and offensive to the God of purity! So a man may, for giving alms to the poor, &c., &c., commit his favourite iniquity, and it shall not be imputed to him as sin! Ah no! 'Without holiness none shall see the Lord,' whatever indulgences he may procure. As to the righteousness of other saints being imputed to him, is not this like saying, 'Give of your oil, for our lamps are gone out?' But, perhaps you say, No, not so; we have given it up, because we see it wrong, and an error. Well, if you have, I am glad of it. But in that case, sir, permit me to ask, How can your popes be infallible, who have maintained so sad an error for so many years.

"After I began my letter, I recollected that there were in the house two little tracts, one a Roman Catholic catechism, and a reply; the other entitled, 'Popery calmly considered.'* I looked for, and read them; and as they contain *some* of the ideas I was about to mention, I make free to send them, as writing is difficult to me, being very infirm. I have also inclosed an extract of the Life of M. de Renty, as a proof I love holiness wherever I find it. It is a book I much love. I have also put in an account of a young woman I much loved, which I think you will like. You may keep these books as long as you please, as I suppose your time is much taken up. The three books you lent me I have perused. I trust they were real conversions. By *real* conversions I mean, from 'the

kingdom of Satan to that of God's dear Son ;' and I do not wonder those persons embraced an offer which appeared to be a refuge from the world and sin, when they seemed to be surrounded with nothing but carnal professors.

"I cannot conclude our correspondence, sir, without once more thanking you for your kind concern and prayers ; and though we differ in some sentiments, if we agree in an earnest desire to know and do 'the whole will of God,' I can embrace you as a brother in the Lord, and regard you as such. One day, I put this question to myself, If Mr. — was to become possessed of civil power, and when he found, after all his pains, I could not see in his light, he should believe it to be his duty to consume me at a stake,—could I love him then ? After a moment's pause, I replied, Yes,—if I really thought he believed it to be his duty, I could honour the upright intention, though I should see the action wrong. Christ shed his own blood for men ; but antichrist sheds the blood of others. Yet, whatever I might suffer, I love an upright intention wherever I see it.*

"I am, Rev. sir, your obliged servant,

"MARY FLETCHER."

* These letters have no date.—ED.

APPENDIX NO. II.

Acts xxvii, 29, *They cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.*

The situation of the ship wherein Paul and his companions were, seems to me to illustrate the state and situation of many of us here. We are told, *There arose a tempestuous wind, called in that country, Euroclydon*—a kind of hurricane, not carrying the ship any one way, driving her backward and forward with great violence. So it is in general with those who enter on the voyage of life. Satan, who is called *the prince of the power of the air, and who ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience*, keeps the mind in a continual agitation. Sometimes they are sunk, and almost crushed under a weight of care; and again raised high on the waves of some expected pleasure. One while they are filled with resentment, on account of some slight from a neighbour, or an unjust accusation from an enemy; while the mind is harassed with the imagination, how it shall be cleared. Sometimes the most idle and extravagant fancies so deeply involve it, that no message from heaven can find any more entertainment than the Saviour could find in the inn at Bethlehem. By all this, the soul becomes restless, and knows not where it is, nor which way it is going. It does not feel that it is in a state of probation, and that this trial is to fix its eternal lot. Dear souls, is not this the case with some of you? You do not know where you are—you do not consider this may be your last night, perhaps your last hour. Your eternal state will then be fixed for ever. If the Lord should call you this hour, are you ready? O remember, it is the word of Jehovah himself, “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib, but Israel doth not know—my people doth not consider.” Again, do you know where you are going? Why, you are going *the broad road*; you are going to hell as fast as you can. It is a *narrow way* that leads to heaven, and you do not know one step of it. You have

not begun to walk therein, nor perhaps to think about it. *O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider you latter end!* It may be you find a great many things to divert and take up your mind; it is employed by Satan from hour to hour. You are like the disobedient prophet, *asleep in the ship when a great storm lay upon them.* You neither see nor know your danger. Are you the safer for this? Would not those who are awake cry out to such, *Awake, thou sleeper, and call upon thy God?* Thou art on the very brink of destruction. Well, then, permit me so to call upon you, lest, when we meet at the great day, you should upbraid me that I had once an opportunity of warning you, and that I did it but by halves; and so the blood of your souls should be found in my skirts. I fear for many in this parish. My soul often weeps in secret for them, lest the word which to others proves *the savour of life*, should to them become *the savour of death*, and rise up in judgment against them.

But I hope you, who are this night within the reach of my voice, are in a degree awakened, and most of you earnestly longing to be brought out of the storm into the quiet harbour of Jesus' breast. To these I chiefly feel my message to be, though I was not willing to leave the sleepers wholly disregarded. Well, let us see what they did in this great danger that we may do likewise. Paul says, "As we were exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day we lightened the ship, and the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. And as neither sun nor stars appeared for many days,* and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of being saved was taken away." Observe, first, they lightened the ship—lighten your hearts! There is too much of the world in them. They cast out their merchandise—cast away your idols! You will say, perhaps, "I cannot." True; I know you cannot yourselves; but if you will *call on the Lord in the time of trouble*, he hath said, *I will hear thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* you will begin to pray in good earnest, and persevere therein, as the Lord is true, you shall know *the liberty of his children*,

* Which was the more terrible, the use of the compass not being then discovered.

and have power to *cast all your idols to the moles and to the bats*. Well, but *on the third day they cast out the tackling of the ship*—the very thing which we might think they would have kept, in order to manage the vessel. No—all must go! Cast away your false confidence in any thing of your own; despair of any help but from the Lord Jesus. Yet obey his word; *Look*, remember he says, *Look unto me, and be ye saved*; yea, *look unto him as the author and finisher of your faith*. *Wait upon him*; and remember the mind is the mouth of the soul—therefore, according as you feed your mind with thoughts, so will the state of your soul be discovered. *Look*, I say, *unto him*, and your soul shall ride out the storm.

And now a gleam of hope appears. Paul stood up and said, “Be of good courage; for there shall be no loss of any life among you. The angel of that God whose I am, and whom I serve, stood by me this night, and said, Fear not, Paul; thou must be presented before Cesar, and lo, I have given thee all them that sail with thee.” So may hope spring up to thee this present moment, whether thou art a poor backslider, or one of the ship’s company, who till this very hour hast been fast asleep; but if now awake, if now in earnest, and willing to be saved, come a step farther yet, and observe what they did next. *They cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for day*. There is no day to the soul till Christ manifests his cheering presence. In order to wait for that, follow their example—*they cast out four anchors*. Let us do so this night. Remember it is your part to *believe*, and it is the Lord’s to give the *peace and joy* consequent on believing. Let us, then, make repeated acts of faith, so *casting our anchor* farther and farther within the veil, and we shall draw up our souls nearer and nearer to God.

Well, let us try to cast out one anchor now. I am sensible your cable is short, therefore we must seek for some ground as *near* you as we can. We will try, if we can, to find it in the *creating love of God*, surrounding us on every side. Look through the creation—observe the tender love of the birds toward their young, yea, even the most savage beasts! From whence does this spring? It is from God. It is a shadow of that infinite compassion which reigns in his heart. Rise a little higher. Fix

your eye on man. How does he love a stubborn son who will neither serve God nor him? True, he frowns on him, and corrects him, lest it should be said to him as to Eli, *Thou preferrest thy son before me*; but if that son shed but a tear of sorrow—raise but a sigh of repentance—if he but come a few steps, how do the father's bowels yearn toward him! How doth he run to meet him! Now carry the idea a little higher—Are ye not the offspring of God? Has he not said, "I have created thee for my glory? I have formed thee for my praise." Is not "his mercy over all his works?" Believe, then, that this "Author of all love is more ready to give the Holy Spirit to you, than you are to give good gifts to your children." Will not this anchor take? Does it still come home? Well, the ground is good, but your cable is too short. Let us try another anchor; and we will drop it on *Redeeming love*.

Lift up your eyes of faith—behold your bleeding Saviour! See all your sins laid on his sacred head! Behold him as your Surety before the throne, and hear him plead, "I have tasted death for every man. Thou, Father, wast in me reconciling the world to thyself, not imputing their trespasses to them." I stood before thee, charged with them all. If this poor soul, who cries for mercy, is deeply in debt to thee, *place it to my account: I will repay*. Now venture on him, venture freely. He hath drunk all the bitter cup for *you*, and he offers this night to take you into fellowship and communion with himself. "He was delivered for your offences! He hath cancelled all the charge against you;" yea, "He was raised again for your justification." Your Surety is exalted in proof that your debt is paid. Come, let me hear some voice among you giving praise, and saying with the Christian poet,—

"Now I have found the ground wherein '
Sure my soul's anchor may remain;
 The wounds of Jesus for my sin,
 Before the world's foundation slain."

Methinks this anchor will hold. Is there not an increase of hope? Harken! You shall hear his voice. Himself hath said, "Hear, O, my people, and I will speak!" Heaven is never dumb, but when man hardens his heart.

But perhaps there are some poor trembling souls still left behind. For the sake of such, we will try to find firm ground a little nearer yet. We will drop our third anchor on the *Promises*. Here are some quite within your reach, "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Yes, *He came to seek and to save that which is lost*. Are you lost? Lost in your own estimation? Then he came to *save you*. Yes, and to *seek* you too, and he seeks you this night as diligently as ever shepherd sought his lost sheep. Will you be found of him? Yes, if you will believe in his love. Remember, "He willeth not the death of a sinner; but had rather he would turn from his wickedness and live." And though it should appear to thee as if a mountain stood in the way, yet this is the word of truth. *If thou canst believe; all things are possible to him that believeth. Thou shalt say to this mountain, Depart, and it shall be done*. There is no getting one step forward in the heavenly road without courage, or, in other words, faith; and I trust there are here many whose anchor has held in the first ground, *Creating love*, more in the second, *Redeeming love*, and surely trembling sinners have found some hold in the *Promises*. The *word of God* is full of them, and they are all for *you*. All belong to a wounded conscience—to sinners seeking the power of faith to conquer their sins, and bring them to God. But yet I fear there may be a feeble-minded one who is still left behind, and I am unwilling any should remain in darkness, when Christ offers them light. But perhaps such will say, "O, I am an ungrateful sinner. I have turned away my eyes from Jesus. The world, and the wild imaginations of my polluted affections, have stolen between me and the Saviour. Once "the candle of the Lord did shine upon my head!" But now he is gone; *my beloved hath withdrawn himself*, and I am again *shorn of my strength*, and feeble as another man. Well, do not despair. Thy soul shall yet ride the storm. There is yet one anchor more, but it is possible you will not all admire it. Some will cry, Is that all? O, it is too low. But let me tell you, low as you esteem it, because it seems within your reach, it will rise to the

highest mansion in heaven. It is, I own, a little dark at the first view, but the more you look upon it, the brighter it will grow. Remember it was the *sound of a ram's horn, and the shout of human voices*, that shook the *mighty walls of Jericho*. God delights to do great things by little means.

The name then of my fourth anchor is, *Resignation*; and there is a motto engraved thereon, "In quietness and confidence shall thy strength be." You that are asleep have nothing to do with this: but you who are awake, and groaning for the salvation you have forfeited—you are invited, nay *commanded*, to cast it out. You have fallen by a worldly spirit, and by indulging a busy and idolatrous imagination. Come, then, let this be the moment! Now cast your whole soul—your everlasting concerns, on the free, unmerited love of the Saviour, and live upon, *Thy will be done!* Let your soul cry out, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." Abandon yourself as a victim, into his hand, and there lie as *clay before the potter*. If you are tempted because you cannot pray, let this be your prayer—let the constant cry of your heart be, *Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven*. And take knowledge, while you are so doing, your prayer is echoed by the highest archangel in heaven, for the glory of that bright abode is a perfect resignation, fully consistent with the most faithful activity. You are permitted to pray, *Father, let this cup pass from me*; yet, while you add, *not my will, but thy will be done*, you join in spirit with the *Saviour and Captain of your salvation*. I have often found, in an hour of temptation, when no other anchor seemed to hold, that thought, *the Lord reigneth*; his will and glory shall be accomplished, and in that I will rejoice, has brought peace, and laid the storm. Lie down at his dear feet, and remember, "Whom he loveth, he chasteneth, and correcteth every son whom he receiveth." He brings your sins to your remembrance, that your soul may be brought to know its misery and wants, and in order that he may burn them up with the purifying fire of his love. Take courage, then, and, with one voice, let us all unite in the cry—*Thy will be done! Thy will be done!* And our song shall be echoed through

all the courts above. Here, then, drop your anchor. It is sound ground, and it will not come home. With this patient faith, therefore, be found in all the means of grace, walking humbly, while you do his will, "And pleading the promises, which are yea and amen in Christ. Blessed are all they who wait for him."

We read of Paul's company, that *they cast out four anchors, and wished for the day*. Do you the same, for that is a wish very pleasing to the Lord. I observed before, that it is not daylight with the soul till that promise is accomplished, *I will manifest myself unto him*. Here is the great design of the wonderful plan of salvation—to restore man to his original communion with God; and he who hath said, *I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely*—now waits to make your souls his loved abode, the temple of indwelling God. There is a rest which remains for the people of God; and you who love the Lord, remember, *He came not only that you might have life*, but that *you may have it more abundantly*. Cry, my beloved friends, day and night, that you may "enter into the land of uprightness, on which the eyes of the Lord are continually," from the beginning of the year to the end. But when the people of Israel slighted the rest of Canaan, and had lost that courage by which alone they could enter—how greatly did it offend the Lord! And will he approve lazy dull seekers of that spiritual Canaan, that *baptism of the Spirit*, to which every believer is expressly called? We often talk of the time when *righteousness is to overspread the earth*, but this millennium must overspread our own hearts, if we would see the face of God with joy. For the very end of our creation is, that we may become *the habitation of God through the Spirit*.

THE END.

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